EIGHTEEN SERMONS

Preached upon ſeveral

TEXTS of SCRIPTURE.

By the Reverend Mr. *William Whittaker*, late Miniſter of *Magdalen Bermondſey*, *Southwark*.

With a ſhort Account of the Author, in an Epiſtle prefixed by *Tho. Jacomb*, D. D.

To which is added,

His FUNERAL SERMON, Preached by *Sam. Anneſley*, D. D.

The righteous periſh, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come, Iſa. 57. 1.

LONDON,

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurſt*, and are to be ſold under the Gate on *London* Bridg, and at his Shop at the three Crowns and Bible in *Cheapſide* near *Mercers* Chappel. 1674.

To the Right Honourable Lady *Elizabeth*, Countess Dowager of *Exeter*.

Madam,

IT is but justice I should give to your Honour some account of my publishing these Sermons to the world, and making bold to present them under the protection of your Name.

Notwithstanding the discouragements of the Age wherein we live, which seems to have a fulsom loathing of such Manna; *Yet I must confess, I was strongly inclined*

thereunto, by the due respects I bear to the memory of my dear deceased Husband; and was willing the world should have some lasting taste of his worth, which through Gods goodness I had the happiness for divers years to enjoy. Besides a mournful Widow, he left divers worthy Friends, who (to feed their reflecting thoughts) desired some useful (and innocent) Relique of him, whom living, they so much lov'd and honour'd; and dying, so lamented. If I was overcome by the perswasions of such as I might well account wiser than my self; though the action should seem to be in some sort inconvenient, yet I hope with all ingenuous persons, the weakness

of

of my Sex, and strength of my affections, will become my just Apology. They are indeed offered in a homely dress of words, and deprived of that polishing which my dear Husband could well have bestowed upon them; and doubtless would have done, had he thought they should have been thus exposed. They are (for the most part) as they drop'd (without curiosity) from his mouth, and were taken by the pen of an affectionate friend. Nor would a scrupulosity which I had, permit they should be so altered (though for the better) as that they might not be wholly call'd his own. Yet must I not here dissemble, that the concurrence of better judgments than

mine, your Honours encouragement and approbation, made me apt to believe these Sermons (even as they are) might be both acceptable to all that knew him, and in some degree serviceable to the Souls of others, who should please to read them.

These Reasons I think sufficient to mention as inducements to this Publication: Which when I had once resolv'd upon, I was held in no suspence to whose Patronage to commit them.

Your Honour hath so many Titles to them, that it had been a kind of robbing, to alienate or transfer your right to any other person. They are Sermons; and therefore they ought

ought to be your Honours. If any understand not the force of this consequence, they want Eyes to behold the most eminent Example of true Virtue and Piety. I can fear no imputation of flattery, while I mention your known and exemplary worth, which prescribes to those of your high Degree things truly great, and becoming that Noble Blood that runs in your Veins. You are one (and where's the other?) that dares be so visibly good, in an Age wherein Virtue is almost scandalous, and Godliness is matter of sport to the froth and smaller Wits of the Town: You therefore (doubtless) will favour and own what others will scorn and disdain.

Add

Add to this (Madam) a special ground of this Dedication. That constant and singular favour which your Honour hath been pleased to reflect, first, upon my ever honoured Father-in-Law, Mr. Jeremy Whitaker, *whose Name is still precious, as of a man for piety, learning, and prudence, famous in his generation: Then upon his Son, my dear Husband, who hath also left such impressions on his friends, as I hope will not soon be defaced; and since his death, upon my most unworthy self: so that you have not left off to shew kindness both to the living and to the dead.*

The last (though not the least) motive is, That some of these Ser-

mons

sons were preached in obedience to your Commands (for such were your Honours desires always to my dear Husband), And as they then *were, so I doubt not but they* now *will be therefore the more acceptable.*

Some one, or all of these Reasons (however they may acquit me of indiscretion, yet) I hope will procure at least a pardon for the boldness of,

Madam,

Your Honours most
deeply obliged Servant,

E. W.

TO THE READER.

Reader,

THou art here presented with some Sermons *preached by that solid and judicious Divine Mr.* William Whitaker: *Whom the Supreme and Soveraign Disposer (in whose hands are the life, breath, and time of all men) a few months since was pleased to take to himself. After which dark and very afflictive Providence, his sorrowful Relict, and some faithful Friends, made it their business to single out of the many Sermons which in the course of his Ministry he had preached, some few which they should judg most fit for the Press, and them to publish to the world. What progress they have made in this Undertaking (as full of zeal towards the living, as of affection towards*

TO THE READER.

Reader,

THou art here preſented with ſome Sermons *preached by that ſolid and judicious Divine Mr.* William Whitaker: *Whom the Supreme and Soveraign Diſpoſer (in whoſe hands are the life, breath, and time of all men) a few months ſince was pleaſed to take to himſelf. After which dark and very afflictive Providence, his ſorrowful Relict, and ſome faithful Friends, made it their buſineſs to ſingle out of the many Sermons which in the courſe of his Miniſtry he had preached, ſome few which they ſhould judg moſt fit for the Preſs, and them to publiſh to the world. What progreſs they have made in this Undertaking (as full of zeal towards the living, as of affection towards*

wards the dead), thou wilt see by that which is here exposed to thy view: 'Tis by this means that these Sermons are brought to light, concerning which I do stedfastly hope, that as they who have promoted the printing thereof, will have no cause to repent of the pains they have taken in the collecting and publishing of them; so, that they who shall buy and read them, will have no cause to repent either of the cost they shall be at in buying, or of the time they shall spend in the perusing of them.

'Tis sad, very sad, that so good a Man, so useful a Minister, in the midst of his days, maturity of judgment, ripeness of parts, height of serviceableness, should so suddenly be snatcht away from us; but the Lord hath done it, in whose Will it becomes us to acquiesce. And we have this to alleviate the sadness of this dispensation, though he be dead, all is not dead with him; his person (to our great grief) is gone, but (to our great comfort) some of his profitable labours are left behind. 'Tis too true, the having a few select Sermons *will not countervail the loss of* himself; *but things being as they are, we must make the best of what we have, when we cannot have what we would. When we cannot enjoy* himself, *we must be glad of any thing that was* his; *as* Elisha *was glad, though he had but*

the

the Mantle of Elijah, *that dropt from him when he aſcended to Heaven.*

Reader, *The great thing deſign'd in the publication of theſe Diſcourſes, being the promoting of thy good, thou canſt not but apprehend thy ſelf the more ſtrongly obliged, to receive them with all thankfulneſs, and to peruſe them with all ſeriouſneſs. Do not miſtake thy ſelf in any fond imagination, that the thing mainly aimed at in this work is the perpetuating of the Name and Memory of the Author deceaſed, (though 'tis pity that ſhould ever be forgotten), or the making of his choice abilities ſomewhat more publickly known to the world, (though 'tis pity too they ſhould not better be underſtood): No, (ſo far as I can judg of the ends of others), I think I may confidently aver, that the furtherers thereof had higher things in their eye;* viz. *the advancing of Gods Honour, and (next to that) of the ſpiritual and eternal good of immortal Souls. Which if ſo, then ſurely as thou art greatly indebted to them for their ſingular love, ſo thou ſhouldſt be very earneſt with the Lord in prayer that theſe great ends may be accompliſhed.*

We

We know too well, by variety of instances, what a disadvantage it is to the labours of godly Ministers, when they are put forth after their death, by others, and not by themselves: For, upon this, they often want the Authors own last hand in the perfecting and polishing of them; and (besides) the world is the more apt to question, whether they be natural and genuine. Now as to the first of these inconveniencies I can say nothing, (I not having had the opportunity of perusing these Sermons), and therefore can be no competent Judg, whether they do or do not lie under that defect. But as to the later, I can assure all who may desire satisfaction therein, here is nothing but what is the genuine issue of the Author himself: The work is posthumous, *but not in the least* spurious. *These Sermons were taken from his own mouth, by a very exact and accurate Noter; and so printed without any considerable alteration (as I am credibly informed). And I do not doubt, but that such who knew the Father, will find so much of his image in the whole work, as that they will presently conclude it to be his very Child.*

I must

I must not commend what I have not seen: Yet though I may not commend the Preacher from the Sermons, I may commend the Sermons from the Preacher. He therefore being one who knew much of the Mysteries of the Gospel, that had a large stock of knowledg, Humane and Divine; that was an able Minister of the New Testament, *a* Workman that needed not to be ashamed: *I say, he being such a person, I may well presume what was done by him to be well done, and that much good may be expected thereby;* * *as was the man, so was his strength. And I am very confident, that none who concur with me in these apprehensions, will meet with any disappointment.*

* Judg. 8. 21.

Reader, I'le say no more of what is here done, I wholly commit it to Gods blessing and thy Christian candour: But as to the Author, how much could I say! What a large Panegyrick, *without any falshood or partiality, might I make of him! how eager is my Pen to run out in giving the world a* full Narrative *of his singular worth and excellent endowments! But I must keep it in; considering, I am writing but a compendious Preface, which will not admit of so large a Subject.*

'Twould

'Twould be an injury to the living (though none to the dead), if such an one as our departed Friend should not be drawn at his full length (and I hope I shall find that done by some other hand); I must content my self with a shorter draught of him, only to shadow out some of his most lovely features and lineaments, without filling of them up: My hearty Affection commands me to do so much, the strict bounds of a Preface will permit me to do no more.

And where shall we take a view of this excellent person and not have something in our eye praise-worthy and commendable? View him as a Man, he was of a most sweet disposition, a most ingenuous temper, a most obliging, affable, courteous, winning deportment, and made up of love; all honey, no gall; who ever either did or could charge him with a sowre, morose, ugly nature? And what an advantage is such a temper and carriage to all, especially to Ministers! 'tis pity that Grace and good Nature should ever be parted; the latter makes a little of the former go a great way, (as a little Sugar is enough to sweeten the Wine that is not sharp and rough): the one makes a person amiable to God; the other, to Men.

View

View him as a Scholar, *he was a very learned Man; one richly accomplished in all parts of good literature. His skill in the several Languages, his insight into all* Philosophy, Philology, *&c. but especially into* Theology, *was such, that if any should attempt to diminish or disparage his Learning, they must give me leave to say of them, either they did not know him, or else they do not know themselves. His natural abilities were very good, which by study and industry he had highly improv'd: He was not one that lov'd to make a noise ('tis your shallow waters that use to do so); but he had well digested and mustered the most considerable parts of true Learning. And I am confident all will concur with me in this Character of him, who are not under a spirit of malevolence and detraction; of that naughty humour to engross all knowledg to themselves, and to lessen the worth of those (let them be who they will) who are not of their own way and party.*

View him as a Christian, *he was sincerely gracious and godly (which puts a greater beauty and luster upon him than all his natural or acquired endowments whatsoever). He was another* Nathaneel, *without guile; another* Jacob, *of a plain spirit; one of a tender conscience (of which some great*

turns in his life were a very signal demonstration); *one who made it his daily exercise to keep* a conscience void of offence towards God and men. *And surely such who saw the blamelessness and holiness of his life, could not but judg this of him, That he was a person truly fearing God. All the several graces of the Spirit were* (*more or less*) *auspicious in him*; *but not any one more than Humility*: *O how eminent was he in this grace of graces! what a pattern was he thereof to all who observed him! He was* ὕψιλος τοῖς ἔργοις ταπεινὸς δὲ φρονήμασι, *high in Gifts, Parts, Grace, Service*; *low in nothing but only in his own thoughts. How meanly did he always speak and think of himself? how highly of others, yea, of many who were much his inferiors! Did he use to exalt himself and depress others? no! in lowliness of mind he esteemed them better than himself* (*wherein I would to God we could all imitate him*).

View him as a Minister, *and* (*as such*) *I think I may say of him, Not many did equalize him, very few did excel him. He was a sound, solid, profitable Preacher; and in all the other works of the Pastoral Office*; *as he was eminently fitted for it, so he was eminently faithful in the discharging of it. Should I particularize the several*

Graces,

Graces, Qualifications, Duties, *which the Word ſets down concerning Miniſters, we ſhould find them all to be in, and done by our deceaſed Brother; and that too in a very great proportion. He was no loyterer in the Vineyard, but a diligent and painful labourer in the work of his great Lord and Maſter. He ſought not himſelf but the good of others: and I verily believe of him, there were but few amongſt his Brethren who were more above the temptations of vain-glory and filthy lucre, than he was. Great was his ſoundneſs in the Faith*, he held faſt the faithful Word, *and the* form of ſound words; *preach'd no* other Goſpel *than what Chriſt and the Apoſtles had preach'd before him; ſtarted no fond and novel Opinions, but kept to the* Faith once delivered *to the Saints. He was no* corrupter of the Word of God; but as of ſincerity as of God, in the ſight of God ſpake he in Chriſt (*as the great Apoſtle once ſaid of himſelf* 2 Cor. 2. 17.); *no* Hay *and* Stubble *was by him laid upon the Foundation; nothing came from him but the* ſincere milk *of the Word. In his preaching the everlaſting Goſpel he was no trifler; O how much was he above the* wiſdom of word! *'twas not polite language, but ſolidity of matter which he minded; what might reach the conſcience rather than what*

might tickle the ear, or please the fancy, that was regarded by him. And as his Doctrine was without taint, so his Conversation was without stain or blemish; he preached well, and (which is much * harder) he lived well too: as he taught others, so he did himself; there was an excellent harmony between his Doctrine and his Practice; he holding forth the Word of life not only in the Pulpit, but in his whole course. His tenderness, towards weaker and dejected Christians, his Prudence in counselling, advising, debating, ordering all his Ministerial concerns, his admirable conjoyning the wisdom of the Serpent with the innocency of the Dove, his meekness and patience in bearing wrongs and unkindnesses; with many other of his excellent properties, I must pass over; lest whilst I remember him, I should forget my self.

Εὐκολον τὸ φιλοσοφῆσαι ἐν ἡμέραις εὐδοκίμοις διὰ τὸ εἶναι τοὺς συνόντας ἀυτῷ διδασκαλίας ἀξίους. Chrysost. in Acta Apost. Hom. 30.

Once more let us take a view of him in his Relations; whilst God continued his Parents, what a loving, obedient, dutiful Son was he! when they were taken away, how did he honour their memory, and (which was much higher) how did he in all things tread in their steps! He was indeed optimi patris optimi filius, an excellent Son of an excellent Father; where, as he succeeded in the place of his Ministry, so also in his Graces. And

and (which in these times is as a thing somewhat rare) he kept to the last that tincture which he had first received in his pious education. What a tender and affectionate Husband he was, the daily tears, deep sorrow of his disconsolate Widow do abundantly testifie: and for the rest of his surviving Relations, who of them do not greatly lament his death! he was a prudent, faithful, hearty Friend, and he was in my loss (amongst many others). Who had further experience of the truth and valuableness of his friendship than my self? which doth very much heighten my grief for the loss of him. But this year hath prov'd fatal to me, it having pleased God therein to remove two of the truest, ancientest Friends I had in the world; this in the Ministry for one, and * one of the Laity for another.

Mr. *William Sommers* Merchant in *London.*

And was he such a person, in all these respects so amiable, so accomplished? what cause have we then with all seriousness to resent that sad Providence which hath made such a breach upon us! How much have we lost in one Whittaker! and shall we not be sensible of our loss? yet withall, how should we bless the Lord that ever we had him, and that we enjoy'd him so long! that though he be gone, yet we have here left behind

something of him. And (chiefly,) how should we endeavour to write after that fair Copy which he hath set us! to follow him who was such a follower of Christ! He lived Christ, and therefore to him death was gain. The good Lord grant we may all so live and so die.

Reader, I'll detain thee no longer; only pray, That all the Helps afforded to thee by the living, by the dead, may be blessed to the furtherance of thy salvation through the supplies of the Spirit. I am (whilest I am)

Thine in our Lord Jesus
to serve thee.

Jan. 27. 1672. Tho. Jacomb.

The

The Texts of the Insuing Sermons.

1 Tim. 1. 16. *The Pattern of Mercy*, Page 1

Col. 1. 12. *Meetness for the Inheritance in two Sermons*, p. 21

Isa. 8. 17. *Waiting upon and looking for God*, P. 78

Tit. 2. 10. *Of Adorning the Gospel, in six Sermons*, p. 105

Psal. 18. 46. *Saints Admiring*, p. 206

1 Sam. 30. 6. --*Their incouraging themselves in God*, p. 234

Psal. 39. 13. *The life of Nature desirable in order to improving in spiritual strength*, p. 256

2 Tim. 2. 19. *Those that name the Name of God must depart from Iniquity.* p. 279

Rom. 8. 38, 39. *Saint* Paul's *Triumph, in four Sermons.* p. 299

Dr. Annesley's *Sermon at Mr.* Whittaker's *Funeral on* Zachariah 1. 5, 6.

Reader,

READER, Pray mend with thy Pen these Errors in Printing directed to, as underwritten; and those others you meet with besides, that mar the sense, attribute it to the Carelesness of the Printers, and not to the Transcriber, much less Author.

Page 16. line 2. add *can*, p. 44. l. 18. for Ephes. read *Epistle*. p. 79. l. 23. r. *Revelation* 1 *Chapter*, p. 112. l. 15. for shall r. may. p. 118. l. 22. for so r. no. p. 120. l. 2. r. 10. p. 121. l. last, r. *his poor*. p. 128. l. 13. for them r. *that*. p. 144. l. 26. add *shew*. l. 27. for and r. are, p. 1[illegible] l. 32. r. Chap. 5. v. 6, 7. p. 290. l. 11. for that r. a. p. 294. l. 7. r. *in one word*. p. 342. l. 15. for ways r. *wages*. p. 373. for sufficient r. *Efficient*.

SERMON I.

The Text, 1 Timothy 1.16.

How be it for this cause I obtained Mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a Pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him, to life everlasting.



THE two great rocks which all the children of men are in danger of suffering the everlasting ship-wrack of their souls upon, are presumption and despair. And for presumption, (because of our natural pride, self flattery, high thoughts of our selves, our carnal security and multitudes of other inbred distempers) it is hard to escape it; and it may be said of this, that it hath slain it's ten thousands. But for despondency, multitudes of poor awakened souls, who have escaped the danger of presumption, have miscarried hereon. From a deep sense of their sins and misery they have been apt to fall into an overwhelming sense of both, and to look upon their wound as incureable, and their disease past healing. Some think so well of themselves that they stand in no need of help: others think so ill of themselves that they look upon themselves

a partial help: It is a nice matter to keep in the middle between both. These are dangerous to us, and highly derogatory to the grace of God: both are a reproach to his kindness; On the one hand to think that God would be at that vast expence and charge, to make so full provision for poor souls beyond what they need: this is to make the blood of his Son to run waste. To think on the other side that the provision that God hath made is too narrow, short, and scant for our relief; this is a great reproach to the mercy of God. But because this is frequently the case of souls whom the Spirit of God convinceth of sin, and are not yet throughly convinced of righteousness, they stick in these Straits, and are apt to be gravelled with objections, doubts [illegible] Therefore God as a tender Father to [illegible] high regard of his Peoples comfort [illegible] hath been pleased to provide against [illegible] ragements, these three ways.

First, By the discovery of his rich and free grace; the boundlessness and unfathomableness of his mercy.

Secondly, by discovering to many rich and precious promises, as they are called 2 Pet. 1. 4. By which he gives incouragement to them to come to him.

Thirdly, By notable instances of his superabundant mercy to sinners in times past, recording them as monuments for ages to come: as here in S. Paul and others. The Apostle in the 15 verse, saith, (*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, whereof I am chief,*) having

having set down the riches of Divine Grace, and the full provision that God hath made therein for the chief of sinners, propounds himself here in the text, for an example and pattern to strengthen the faith of others; and by his own experience to encourage them to rely and rest upon what he had found so faithful and sufficient unto him: *How be it for this cause I obtained mercy*, &c. In the words here is ——— 1. S. Paul's humble and thankful acknowledgment of that kindness and mercy which God had shewed unto him. 2. This gracious interpretation and construction, with the improvement he makes of this mercy. 1. S. Paul's humble and thankful acknowledgment of that kindness and mercy which God had shewed unto him.

How be it I obtained mercy. There is no emphasis in the words *how be it*, who seemed to be at such a distance, and removed from mercy, when he seemed to be so unfit, so unworthy, and under so much disadvantagement, and great disadvantages (for what case can possibly be beyond mine?) *how be it I obtained mercy*, though my case was so bad. S. Paul speaks here of such offences as can scarcely be paralleled, (that was in the 13 verse.) *Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and Injurious, yet I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief*; not that S. Paul would thereby extenuate or diminish his sins, he only comforted himself in this, that his sins were committed out of ignorance, there was more of mistake then maliciousness in them, and that he did not intend an exageration or diminution of his sins, appears because he aggravates them so

much and maketh it so great a wonder that one such an one as he should obtain mercy. He takes it as a matter of admiration and astonishment; for if any person may seem to be unpardonable, mercy, saith he, I was as like as any, I came so near the borders of the unpardonable sin, that it is a wonder to me, and to all that understand what my carriage hath been, that I should obtain mercy.

Secondly, Here is the interpretation, S. *Paul* makes of the kindness of God to him, it is not singly to him, to his benefit, to his personal and peculiar advantage, but for the encouragement of others in after times, *For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe*, &c. It is the language of a humble and thankful soul, *For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first*:

First, how it cannot be understood in respect of order of time, because there were multitudes who had obtained mercy, that lived in the ages before, and as great sinners as S. *Paul*, as *Manasseh* and others, in the Old and New Testament.

How then doth he say *in me first*? Not so much in respect of the order of time, as the evidence of the riches of mercy: In me first, that is in me chiefly; thus many learned interpreters expound it: Besides the word is the same with that in the verse before, πρῶτος, which is translated there, Chief, *This is a faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*.

1. Doct. *God in shewing mercy to some doth intend good to others.*

S. *Paul* was sensible of this in the mercy that he himself had partaken of; I obtained mercy, but it was that I might *be a pattern to them who believe.*

David was sensible of this in that prayer of his 51 *Psal.* 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, when he had been petitioning of God for mercy, 9. vers. *Hide thy face from my sins* &c. 13, *Then will I teach transgressours thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

Oh, do but shew me these favours and mercies and I will improve them for the benefit of others, 40. *Psal.* 1. 10.

David expresseth his faithfulness to God, and his thankfulness for the mercies he had received, because he did thus declare it.

Nay, this is the very end of Gods leaving these things upon record, the kindness he shews to his people, and the severity he expresseth toward his enemies, that these might be improved by us to our good, 15. *Rom.* 4. *For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

But I shall not insist on this,

2. Doct. *One of the highest expressions of our thankfulness to God for the mercies he hath vouchsafed to us, is to do our utmost to encourage others to own and acknowledge, and to come in to God, and partake of what we enjoy.*

What a wonder doth S. *Paul* make it here that he had mercy from God, *How be it I obtained*

mercy, though such and such a one as I was, yet I obtained mercy; but it was for a pattern to others that hereafter should believe on him to everlasting life; He debaseth himself as low as hell and exalteth Gods mercy above the heavens; indeed every thing of mercy is a great wonder considering what we are in point of vilenes and unworthiness; but it is an evidence that mercy is then mercy when it doth not onely elevate and lift up our hearts in admiration and praising God, but in commending him to others as the object of their trust and hope.

3. Doct. *That the scope and aim of every Person should be everlasting life.*

4. Doct. *That the onely way to obtain this everlasting life is in a way of believing.*

5. Doct. *That the work of beleiving is a difficult work.*

6. Doct. *Because it is a difficult thing to believe therefore God hath appointed all kind of helps for the working of faith in the hearts of beleivers.*

But I shall wave all these, and speak to this:

Doct. *God is pleased sometimes to single out Capital and notorious offenders, to make them the objects of his special and distinguishing mercy to the end they may be as standing instances and famous Monuments of his mercy in after ages; and thereby prevent all occasions of doubts, suspicion, and jealousies which humble sinners are in danger of.*

This Doctrine must be warily understood. I do not say God always or ordinarily doth so, this cannot possibly be: it is contrary to the holiness and truth of God. As God is a holy God

he

he cannot but abhorre it. Though he hath mercy sometimes on the greatest sinners, yet he bears a perfect detestation to sin: therefore sin is called that abominable thing, *do not that abominable thing that I hate.* He cannot but have an infinite displeasure against sin because it is so unsuteable to his holiness, *Psal. 5, 6, 7. The Lord tryeth the Righteous but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. His countenance doth behold the upright,* and those only, with approbation and delight.

So as to the truth and veracity of God in his threatnings against sin, which he hath so expressly pronounced his displeasure against, he is in point of his truth and faithfulness obliged to make good what he hath threatened as well as promised. Therefore God doth not always nor ordinarily make notorious sinners the objects of his pardoning mercy, because this would make God a seeming approver of what himself hates, and a countenancer of what he puts a great discountenance upon: but sometimes God singles out some notable sinners and leaves them as instances and monuments to after ages, and it is to this end and purpose that they might be as so many Beacons on a hill to warn others to take heed of their sins, and to give light to others to encourage them, notwithstanding their objections, doubts, and fears. Sometimes you finde S. *Paul* admiring the grace of God shewed to him; that he who was at that remoteness and distance from mercy, should find mercy and favour; You have a notable instance in the 2 *Ephes.* 2. *Wherein in times past* (speaking of them in their Gentilism)

ye walked according to the course of this world, &c.

This was a sad condition, to be under the power, to be captive to the will and pleasure of such an usurper.

Vers. 4. *But God, who is rich in mercy,* hath quickned us together with Christ.

In the 7. vers. *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ.*

That he might leave such standing objects of his mercy as might obviate and prevent all discouragements in doubting Christians, and because S. *Paul* propounds himself singly in this Text I shall confine my self to that particular instance, and the end and account, upon which he obtained so much mercy: it was that he might *be a pattern to others.*

In opening the Doctrine I shall speak to three things.

1. What those sins were that S. *Paul* before his conversion was guilty of, and notwithstanding which he obtained mercy, which was in his eye so great a wonder.

2. What mercy he did obtain notwithstanding those great sins.

3. What there is of Encouragement from these instances of S. *Paul* and others recorded in the Scripture for the encouragement of doubting Christians in after ages.

1. What were those sins S. *Paul* was guilty of before his Conversion; You find them summed up in the 13 *vers.* of this Chapter, *I was a blasphemer*: That is the first; Now blasphemy was a capital

capital crime and to be punished with death, and by stoning to death.

These are two things remarkable in the punishment of blasphemers: It was no less then death, and every person who was not guilty was bound to purge himself from so great a crime by witnessing his detestation of it, *Thy hand shall be first against him.*

The tender Father must be severe against the Child of his own bowels.

Blasphemy is branded in Scripture with many black titles and the punishment of it was very severe.

This was the great crime objected against *Naboth*; he must be carried out of the City and stoned as a vile Person, *not fit to live because he blasphemed God and the King*, 1 *King.* 21. 9. 13.

A greater crime then this the enemies of our Saviour (notwithstanding all their combinations against him) could not alledge, a stronger charge then that of blasphemy, they could not lay against him, 26 *Matth.* 65. *Then the high Priest rent his clothes, saying, he hath spoken blasphemy.*

What was the blasphemy? 61 vers. *This fellow said I am able to destroy the temple of God and build it in three days.*

Here was reproachful Language, this fellow, this contemptible fellow spake thus and thus, and you have heard his blasphemy, what need you any more witnesses. This is such a sin that *Herod* (though he was not guilty of blaspheming God himself yet because he did seem to countenance others,

others, who did, when he made that eloquent Oration when the People, *cryed out, it is the voice of God and not of man*, v. 22. *Act.* 21. 22.) for his base connivance at this sin brought ruine upon himself; because he took the glory to himself.

Because *David* had but occasioned the enemies *to blaspheme*, God dealt so severely with him; *The Child must die*, 2 Sam. 12. 14.

I might shew at large with what severity the Magistrates were bound to bear witness against this sin, 3. *Levit.* 1. And under what express a detestation of this sin we make it appear.

That is the first, a blasphemer.

2. A persecutor; and that he was to purpose do but observe those emphatical expressions by which S. *Paul* sets out the hainousness of the guilt of this sin, 7. *Act.* 58. *And cast him out of the City and stoned him.*

8. *Act.* 1. *And Saul was consenting to his death.*

9. *Act.* 1. *And Saul yet breathing out threatnings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord*, &c.

And this is the next step to blasphemy, (persecution:) He would neither imbrace Christ himself, nor could he patiently endure that others should, but with all the rage and fury imaginable he laboured to oppose the ways of Christ.

3. He was *Injurious*, the word in the Greek is ὑβριστὴς, it is but once more used in the New Testament, 1 *Rom.* 30. ὑβριστὰς, ——— it is Translated *despiteful*, and denotes thus much; when

when his power could not reach the Persons of Saints nor the worldly concerns of Professors, yet he did his utmost to blast their names and blemish their reputation: he was a reviler, he spare nothing that was injurious to them, but what was beyond his power to inflict. These were his sins.

2. What mercy he did obtain notwithstanding such sins, and that in three instances.

1. Sparing mercy, God had born with him: notwithstanding he was often guilty of those sins which might have brought wrath and destruction more quickly upon him! he wondered at Gods patience towards him, this is mentioned in this verse, *That he might shew forth all long suffering.*

When he once came to understand what he had been, and what he had done, he stands amazed at the holy God that had so much patience with him. God had (it is true) struck him to the ground, he admired that God had not struck him as low as hell. We are apt to think, beholding the gross abominations, that are more open and visible in our days, what infinite patience there is in God, that he doth not immediately break out upon such as are guilty; but S. *Paul*, like a poor humble sinner, buries himself at home, and spends his wondering chiefly on Gods patience towards himself, who had been a blasphemer, and persecutour, and injurious, and yet alive, and on this side hell; yet *a pattern of the patience and long-suffering of God.*

2. He obtained pardoning and renewing mercy, in respect of that double change that was wrought

wrought upon him: there was an outward change in respect of his state and condition; there was an inward change in respect of the frame and disposition of his heart, and of the high and choice mercies which he obtained. Mercy in respect of his state and condition: from a childe of *wrath* he became a childe of *favour*: from a state of death he was brought into a state of life: from a state of condemnation he was brought into a state of absolution and pardon, as he himself speaks, 2 *Ephes.* 5. *even when we were dead in sins he hath quickned us together with Christ.* We were dead, guilty of death, under a state of condemnation; but now 5. *Rom.* 1. *being justified by faith we have peace with God.*

Now justification is not only an act of mercy, and consists not barely in the remission of sin, but it is an act of justice also, in regard of the account upon which sin is forgiven; this is a Doctrine whereof many in these times speak very lightely: therefore to give a right notion of justification, consider it doth not only consist in the bare remission of sin, but this remission of sin is upon a valueable consideration, Divine justice having received a valueable satisfaction by the blood of Christ; For nothing could explate our sins but his blood. Now S. *Paul* was sensible of the great mercy of God to him, and by this mercy he means pardoning mercy.

Again, he did partake of purging mercy, in regard of the inward frame and disposition of his heart; This he frequently mentions.

Thirdly, That is not all, but he obtained Commissionating grace; grace to be employed, to be made

use of in the highest degrees of service to God and his Church. From the lowest degree of enmity, he was raised to the highest place of ... 12. verse of this Chapter, *And I thank Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me; for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Min...*

Though the Ministry be never so much despised, he accounted it a high honour to be put into it; he that was a blasphemer, a persecutour, ... that Christ should put this honour upon him, here is mercy indeed: for such an offender to be spared, to be pardoned, to be sanctified, to be made use of as such a glorious chosen instrument of God among the Gentiles, this was mercy ...

What encouragement is there in this, and such like famous instances, which God hath set upon record as monuments of his mercy, for broken hearted sinners, who are ready to sink under the weight and burden of their own ...

First, These examples and standing monuments of Gods mercy to others, are incouragements to humble broken hearted sinners; because the same Fountain of mercy still stands open to us that was open to them, and by these standing monuments, God hath enabled his people to answer those puzzling objections, that do stick most with them.

The bowels and compassion of a gracious God are open now, which were open to Saint *Paul*.

This is the original of all kind of mercies, and unless

unless this be open, every door of mercy is shut. 59. Isa. 1. *The Lords hand is not shortned that he cannot save.*

He hath the same bowels now which he had then; he is the same yesterday and to day, and for ever. His mercy is *from one generation to another*: *His mercy endures for ever*, It is no less than it is so often mentioned in the 136. Psalm. We have the same fountain opened to us, that is, the same God.

Secondly, There is the same merit in the blood of Christ now as was. *He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

There is an everlasting efficacy in his blood.

The Papists speak of their Treasury of indulgences, that sinners may live upon it if they will give a handsome rate for them; this is a great delusion, and multitudes have been deluded with it.

But this is true and real in Christ, there is a treasury of all kinde of blessings laid up by his purchase; *by his once offering up himself he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

Thirdly, There is the same efficacious power of the Spirit of Grace.

We have the same operations of the spirit of grace to convince, and to convert; to teach, and renew us; to prevent us from sinning; and to regenerate us to holiness; to assist us, and to *enable us to every good way, and work.*

Fourthly, If you regard the instrumental cause, there is the same vertue in ordinances now which ever was; because the strength and vertue of ordinances depend upon Gods presence

and

and concurrence with them. Now God hath promised his presence and concurrence to the end of the world, 28. Matth. last, *Lo, I am with you to the end of the world.*

Not only with your Persons while you live, but with your successours, by whom the same ordinances are dispenced, when you are dead and gone.

Again, if you regard the final end, salvation and happiness, God hath the same love for the salvation of lost and undone creatures now, which he had of Old, therefore says S. Paul, 15. Rom. 8, 9. *Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto your Fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorifie God for his mercy.*

There is an account given, why the Gospel should extend to the Gentiles, *because God will be glorified among them*, 3. Ephes. 21.

He is able and ready to do for his People, above what they can either ask, or think; That he might have glory in all ages even to the end of the world.

Secondly, We are under the same encouragements, because we are under the same promises that they were, and what there is of difference, is rather of advantage to us, above what it was to them, the promises to us are more clear and plain.

We have the same Covenant now, that they had, 3. Gal. 14. *That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles*, we have the same Covenant to plead.

And the terms and conditions upon which mer-

mercy is tendered in the promises is the same faith and repentance which was accepted then is accepted now; and these conditions are as clear now, then at that time.

3. The great design and intent of God in singling out such Persons, is that he might have sufficient antidotes against all objections: this is the account S. *Paul* gives in this place, *That in them Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe.*

Now how hath God been pleased by such examples to provide against all the discouragements of poor humbled and doubting sinners?

1. God hereby shews, that as great and grievious sinners, as we can think our selves to be, have been pardoned. *I obtained mercy, saith he, who was a blasphemer*, therefore let no man hence forward despair of mercy, for there are riches and fulness enough of mercy in the bowels of God for the greatest sinners. *Manasseh* (whom the Scripture discovers to be as a summary or abridgement of all kind of wickedness, 2 *Chron.* 33. 2.) had done like the heathen in all their abominations, 9. *vers.* He made them equal with them in Witchcrafts, and Idolatry, and in all manner of abominations; Nay, to exceed the heathen, and yet when he was in Affliction in the 12, 13. vers. *he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him.* Great sinners may be pardoned.

2. Some object the unworthiness of their Persons,

Person, but consider as unworthy Persons as you can be have obtained mercy, and been made instruments of mercy to others, 36. *Ezek.* 31. 32.

3. Persons as unwilling as you have found mercy, 5. *John* 40. Its our Saviours great complaint you will not come to me that you might have life; he is willing to give it; what can poor dead Persons more need then life? he is willing to bestow it; he invites them to accept of it, *but they would not come to him that they might have life.* But yet many of those obtained mercy.

Nay, Let me adde farther, is it your inability that discourageth you? As unable as you have found mercy; our Saviour tells us, 6. *John* 44. *No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*

We are all naturally unable, unwilling, and unworthy, yet God gives encouragement by these instances and standing monuments of his favour to answer all objections.

Use 1. This may serve by way of reproof to three sorts of Persons, Hath God left such standing Monuments of his mercy to Notorious offenders; even such as is sufficient to answer all objections, if they be but once humbled and come to him upon his own terms? Then this may reprove such as Consult not the Scriptures, that know not what monuments God hath left upon record for our encouragement; at what a loss are such Persons for the making use of such examples.

2. It reproves such as are careless in making use of them; that seldom concern themselves about the case of their souls; that neither Consi-

der how it is with them at present, nor how it is like to be with them for the future.

3. It reproves such as make a perverse use of these examples, in turning the grace of God into Lasciviousness and Wantonness, in making use of these examples of mercy, either for the imboldening of themselves in sin, to the hardening of their hearts against Gods fear; or to encourage themselves in the delaying their repentance, and applying themselves to God for mercy; but to loose the reins of their Corruptions, because such great sinners have been pardoned: Therefore if Pardon is easie to be had, it is but crying God have mercy upon me: Oh, take heed of such bold Presumption in sin; it is a most dangerous thing to play the wantons with the tender grace and mercy of God; how many are apt to plead for the justification of their sins, because many have been saved, who have been guilty of their sins. I do not know of any kind of sins but God hath given us instances of his saving some from such sins? But what a high degree of blasphemy is this to pervert the grace of God to such contrary ends to what God intended it.

All along in Scripture these Monuments are mentioned, to keep us humble, thankful and lively in the service of God; and not to enbolden us in sin; this is quite contrary to the whole design of the Gospel.

Hence see also, the necessity of keeping these famous instances fresh in your thoughts, for the supporting of your Spirits; Oh, think what their case is, how difficult and dangerous, who forget these examples? and what success they

will

will find who improve them faithfully and not wantonly. And consider the great difficulty of believing: it is what God commands in a way of Condition; and it is what God hath promised in a way of grace: it is beyond our power to believe: who hath believed our report, to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? it is onely the mighty Arm of God that can work faith in such hearts as ours are. How much prejudiced are we against every thing of Faith? as the Person of Christ, and the righteousnes of Christ? What a hard task had S. *Paul* with many of the Churches, (as the *Romanes* and *Galatians*) to bring them off from their self-righteousnes, and trusting to their works? Oh, it is not an easie matter to bring our hearts to close with Christ, to think that Christ will entertain thoughts of mercy towards us. These are the two Capital Mistakes by which most of the world miscarry, either to think so slightly of sin, as not to regard it: or so blackly of sin as to think themselves past all remedy. Let what hath been said encourage you to make this use, to strengthen your faith, and to lay hold humbly and thankfully on the promises made to you: it is to this end that God hath left such paterns of mercy on record for us: and consider it is the principal design of Satan to rob you of faith, to weaken believing, and to keep you off from believing, *Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat.*

If Satan can but destroy our faith he will destroy our peace, comfort, and safety. Nay, he doth at once rob us of all. I should have shewed the

sinfulness of unbelief, when God hath been so gracious, not onely to make such full promises and such gracious offers, but to leave such monuments and paterns of his graciousness, and that yet we should be unbelieving, and stand off from God; this false kind of humility is that which hath deceived many; let an awakened sinner therefore take heed of it: It is to this end God hath left examples of his mercy to others, to encourage others that should believe on him in after ages.

SERM

SERMON II.

The Text, 1. Coloss. 12.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.

THough God hath not thought meet to exempt his people from affliction, yet he hath taken care that they shall not be destitute of supports sufficient to bear them up above dejections in their afflictions; and of all the encouragements that we finde upon record in the Scriptures, this is none of the least, that S. *Paul* mentions here in the Text; *giving thanks*, &c.

The Apostle begins this Epistle according to his usual and accustomed manner, to wit, with prayer on the behalf of them to whom he writes; the blessings he prays for are chiefly these three,

First, That they may know the will of God, and know it fully; this you have in the 9. vers. *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*

The Second thing he prays for, is, that they

may obey the will of God, and obey it universally, and that [illegible] in this life, *That they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

The third thing he prays for is, that they might submit unto the will of God, and submit to it with chearfulness, and that you have in the 11. vers. *Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.*

There are three things, that are essential to a sincere Christian, The knowledge of Gods will, The practising of what he knows, and that not onely the doing of what God Commands, but a submitting to what God inflicts: These are the three things the Apostle prays for, and it is worth our while to consider, the order in which he prays for them, ——— First, He prays that they may know the will of God: they did know it in some measure already, but he prays that they may know it fully; knowledge is that which makes way for practice; without knowledge, *Solomon* tell us the minde cannot be good; but knowledge alone cannot speak our condition to be safe; A great deal of knowledge the worst of Creatures have had, not onely the worst of men, but the worst of Creatures, but that knowledge which is an unactive knowledge, is little better then the knowledge of Devils, for they 2. *James* 19. *believe, and tremble.*

And therefore the Apostle here prays, that they might adde to their knowledge obedience, and that this obedience might be fully; but our obedi-

obedience can never be compleat, unleſs it be as well in ſubmitting to the providential will of God, as in doing his Commanding will: You read of a twofold will of God; his preceptive will, that ſets before us the rule of our duty, and his providential will, and by this he orders all our affairs; we muſt ſhew our obedience in both.

The Apoſtle having therefore thus recommended the Spiritual eſtate of theſe *Coloſſians* to God by prayer, he goes on and encourageth them to follow his prayer with ſuitable endeavours, *giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet*, &c.

There are in theſe words three particulars.

1. An eminent priviledge, An inheritance in light.

2. The means by which this priviledge is attained, that is, we muſt be made meet before we can be made partakers of it.

3. The duty that lies upon all them whom God hath been thus far gracious to, as to make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. They ſhould be full of thankful acknowledgements and praiſes, giving thanks, &c.

Whatever their outward condition might be, though they lived in times of trouble, and perſecution, though many black clouds did then hang over the Church of God, yet God is merciful, for which you ſhould be thankful, and which may cauſe you to rejoyce in his goodneſs, what ever your outward condition may be.

I ſhall a little explain the words, and then proceed,

1. Here is an eminent Priviledge, and that is in general said to be an inheritance, the Original is, εἰς τὴν μερίδα τῆς κλήρου, to part of the Inheritance; which word κλῆρος properly signifies a lot, most interpreters think it to be an allusion to the people of *Israel*, when by their several tribes, and families, they had their inheritances divided among them; it was all done by lot, they took it by lot, every *Israelite* had his Portion, and Inheritance by lot, so hath every gracious soul here this spiritual inheritance.

More particularly, it is said to be an inheritance, that is, not Common, but an inheritance peculiar to the Saints, that is, to them that are renewed, and Sanctified, to them that are born again, for though the word sanctification is used sometimes in a larger sense, yet here it must mean an inward, and through work of grace, The inheritance of the Saints in light. But then as it is no ordinary inheritance, so neither is it any despicable, or mean inheritance, it is called here an inheritance of the Saints in light. The word light in Scripture, is frequently put for comfort, thus you read in the 8. *Esther* 16. It is said there, when *Mordicai* was advanced into favour with *Ahasuerus*, and those black clouds were blown over the heads of the Jews, then had they light, and gladness, So in 97. *Psal.* 11. *Light is sown for the righteous*, light, that is, joy, *and joy for the upright in heart*: 112. *Psal.* 4. you have the like expression there, *to the upright ariseth light in darkness*, that is, though for the present he may be under many troubles, and perplexing thoughts, yet light is sown; though

at present the seed sown under ground, seems to be dead, and wither, yet it will bring forth a plentiful increase. Sometimes it denotes not onely comfortable things, but the transcendent excellency of things; thus it is said of Satan, he transforms himself into an Angel of light, 2 *Cor.* 11. 14. *an Angel of light*, that is, an Angel of glory, a blessed Angel: in the 104. *Psal.* 2. God is said, *to Cover himself with light, as with a garment*, it denotes the transcendent excellency of his Majesty; so that you see this inheritance is no mean nor ordinary thing, it is no despicable thing, it is peculiar to the Saints, it is the inheritance of the Saints in light, that is, it is a glorious and excellent inheritance.

2. Here is the means by which alone this inheritance can be obtained, that is, none can partake of it, but those that are first made meet for it: This is a necessary predisposition in all who do partake of this Inheritance; they must first be made meet, ἱκανὸς, the word Meet is often translated worthy: Sometimes it signifies suitable, *bring forth fruit meet for repentance*, that is, as becomes repentance. *Let your Conversation be as becomes the Gospel*, *A giving thanks to the Father who hath made us meet*, this implies two things,

1. That we are naturally unmeet, we are not born *meet*, we must be made *meet*; who hath made us *meet*.

2. That our being made meet, is not the fruit of our own endeavour, but of Gods grace: who hath made us meet; it is not our act, but Gods goodness; it is not any strength of our own, but

the

the care, and love of God, who hath made us thus, for *who bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one, Job* 14. 4.

3. Here is the duty that lies upon them towards whom God hath been so gracious as to make them meet to be partakers of this inheritance, They should be continually giving thanks that God hath been so good unto them, it is more then if God had blessed them with all the good things of this world, it is more then if God had given them the utmost of what they can desire, nay more then their desires can reach.

There are several observations which may be raised from the words, These two I shall give you,

1. Doct. *What ever the condition of the people of God may be for the present, yet they have an inheritance for the future.*

The people of God are in this world, as Children in their *non-age*, as heirs that are under Tutours, and Guardians; They may have a right, and title to very large Priviledges; but they are under age, they have not the fruition of what is their own. This is the very allusion of the Apostle, 4. *Gal.* 1. *Now I say, that the heir so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all.*

You know the first-born, he is an heir, though he be but an infant; Now all the Children of God are stiled his first born this you may see 12. *Heb.* 23. *The Church, of the first born*, how? not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God and as the Children of Nobles are born to Honours; and the Children of

rich

men to Estates, so the Children of God are born to this inheritance. I speak not of their Natural, but Spiritual birth; that are born again. It is said of our Saviour, that he is the great heir of all things; and it is said of the members of Christ, that they are co-heirs with him: and what is that to which they are heirs? It is so fully, and affectionately described, and so Rhetorically, that it is worth our while to pause a little upon it, in the many expressions concerning it, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. *Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again*, &c. There is Regeneration; but to what? *To a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you.*

For the clearing of this, I shall only alledge some few arguments, That it must needs be so, that the people of God, (those that are truly regenerate, and born again) have an inheritance intailed on them.

1. The first argument is drawn from their present condition here on earth, this speaks that they must have something future.

1. Their Comforts in outward things are usually fewer then others: The Papists make prosperity a mark of the true Church; but how contrary this is to the history of the Scripture, and the experience of all ages, I need not mention: We find God many times is abundantly gracious to those in these spiritual blessings, to whom he gives very little of outward Comforts; In our

Saviours

Saviours time, you read the poor received the Gospel, so in after times, 2. *James* 5. you read *God hath chosen the poor in this world, rich in Faith.*

There are many that are low in the world, yet high in esteem with God; I do not speak as if there was an Inconsistency between these things, but I speak of what is the usual Condition of Gods People, in respect of these outward things: Now, it cannot be imagined, that God should be more liberal, and bountiful in outward sorts of blessings to his enemies, then to his friends, that he should extend bounty in any kind more largly to them he hates, then to those he loves.

Now, in that God so often bestows less of outward good things upon his people, when he bestows more upon his enemies; this is an Argument that there remains something for the future for the People of God. This argument hath so far prevailed with many of the heathen, that they have been convinced there is another world, wherein God will manifest the righteousness of his Judgements, as the Apostle calls the day of Judgement, *the day of the revelation of the righteous judgement of God.*

2. As their outward comforts, are usually fewer, so their delights in, and Affections to what they enjoy are usually lower, they do not look on the things of this world, as any great matter: when others account the world their Idol. In the 10. *Mat.* 37. you read what the duty of the people of God is, *He that loveth father or mother more then me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more then me, is not worthy of me.*

Others

Others may make them Idols in their Affections; but it is the duty of a gratious soul to keep these things low in its thoughts. The description of the Church you have in the *Revelation*, *The woman is cloathed with the Sun, and hath the Moon under her feet*; her feet were where others hearts are, she trampled on the world. Now God sometimes calls his People to an actual forsaking of these things for him; you read, 12. *Gen.* 1. That God called *Abraham to leave his fathers house, and his native country, and his friends, and acquaintance*, and to go he knew not whither, and amongst he knew not whom, and *Abraham* yielded obedience: So *Moses*, 11. *Heb.* 25. *He chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.*

Thus the Disciples, 19. *Matt.* 27. left all. *Then answered Peter, and said unto him, behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee.* And though God doth not call us to such actual forsaking of all things for him, at all times; yet to an habitual, to a dispositional forsaking them: that is, to a despising, and an undervaluing of them for himself: thus far God calls to forsake them at all times. Now for as much, as their outward comforts are fewer, and the comfort they take in these outward things are meaner, it argues that God hath some thing better in store for his people than these things.

3. Their outward afflictions are usually greater, then others, and that partly out of Gods love to them, and their love to him, not only in regard of the malice of their enemies, but partly out of Gods

Gods love to them, 12. *Heb.* 6. *Whom the Lord loves he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

We have need of afflictions, God our Father in his fatherly care is pleased to afflict his more than others: you find when God was angry with the people of *Israel*, he discovered his anger to them in that he would not vouchsafe to make known himself to be angry: *Why should you be stricken any more? Isaiah* 1. 5.

God would not be at the pains to correct them. Now as Gods love to his People, makes their afflictions greater then others, so many times their love to him. 11. *Heb.* 37. *They were stoned, they were sawn in sunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep skins, and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.*

3. Those primitive worthies, might easily have escaped dangers, and shunned those extremities that they under-went; but its said *they accepted not of deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.*

That is, they were more tender of the glory of God, and their faithfulness to him, then whatever in the world was of highest esteem among them. So if you look over the book of God, you shall find, though all men have had a portion of afflictions, yet the people of God have usually had a larger share; how many oppositions, have they met with, upon no other account then upon the account of their faithfulness to God: *Abel* was not only persecuted, but murdered, by his Brother. *Abraham* met with no small tryals, many times; so *Moses*: I might speak of many instances,

stances, which would be too large to mention; how *Elijah* was forced to fly for his life; *Isaiah* was fed with the bread of affliction, and waters of Adversity; and Ecclesiastical writers tell us, that *Isaiah* was sawn asunder: and the Scripture that *Jeremiah* was put into a dungeon; and history tells us, that he was afterwards slain in *Babylon*: and therefore many antient writers do frequently mention the flaming bush, the Ark toss'd upon the waves, to be excellent Emblems, to describe the State of the Church here upon the earth; This bush is ever burning, but not consumed, Gods care of it is such.

4. The only support that Gods people have here, is their hope of this inheritance. The Apostle tells the *Hebrews*, what they must expect to meet with; and says he, you have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God, you may reap the promises; Yet says he, a little while, and he that shall come will come, and the just shall live by his faith. Alass, should they live by sense, their comforts would be soon overclouded; but they live by faith, that is, they live above these outward things, and mind their spiritual, and heavenly concernments, *Heb.* 34, 35. You read in the 20. *Act.* 24. what was S. *Pauls* great support, when *he went bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, None of these things move me; Neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the Ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testifie the Gospel of the grace of God.*

He had higher things in his eye, then all these

things

things were; this was that supported him, 1 Cor. 15. 19. *If we had hope only of Christ in this life, we were of all men most miserable.*

Now, if you put all these together, Consider what the case of Gods People is in this world, and what their carriage is; then certainly, there must be an Inheritance remaining for them; some thing better, some thing greater, then what they enjoy here.

2. A second reason is this, Consider, the price that Christ hath paid to purchase this inheritance for them; When Christ was leaving the world, he tells them, I go to prepare a place for you, in my fathers house there are many Mansions; Nay, he tells them in the 14. *John*, that this was the very design of his coming into the world; and we think that all that agony, and all those bitter crys, that he offered up in the days of his flesh, to be lost, and disregarded; Now, what his design in all his sufferings were, you may see, 17. John 24. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

We cannot think that God who looks upon that as a condemning sin in others, to trample under foot the blood of Christ, that he should do any thing like this himself: The 53. *Isaiah* is an excellent Chapter to describe those transactions that past between the Father, and Son, in order to mans redemption; Christ he undertakes to suffer on their behalf; And the Father he undertakes the success of his sufferings, in letting of him, see of the travel of his soul.

3. Con-

3. Consider the promises of God, and certainly the promises of God, are a sure foundation to build upon; The promises of a man, though of the greatest of men, are but mutable; God hath bid us to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; Put not your confidence in Princes: and in the 62. *Psal.* You have many expressions to that purpose; But the word of God, this is a sure foundation. *Heaven and earth shall sooner fail, then one jot or tittle of what he hath said.*

Now God hath promised, a future state of glory to his people, a future inheritance.

Lastly, Consider the earnests, and pledges, that God doth in this world afford his people of their future inheritance; he gives them some pledges, that they may know how sure it is, and he gives them some fore-tasts, that they may know how sweet it is: 1. *Ephes.* 13. 14. *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye had heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of our purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

So much for the Doctrinal part; What ever the condition of the people of God may be for the present; yet, they have a future inheritance; they may have but little perhaps in possession, but they have much in reversion: they may have nothing in hand; but they have a great deal in hope. For the use and application of this point,

1. What folly is it then, to judge of them that are sincerely gracious, by what is present? Alas, if

you judge of things, or persons, by what is
seat, as to outward things, this is a fallible
In the 73. *Psal.* the Psalmist eying this
much, was in great danger of mistaking,
at last recollects himself and says, If I should
thus, *I should offend against the generation*
righteous. So 37. *Psal.* 37. *Mark the perfect*
behold the upright: for the end of that man
His beginning may be trouble, his conti
may be with oppositions, but his end
peace.

2. In the next place, Is it so?

Then let us make no misconstructions of
dealings with us. If we can but answer this
question, that we are in the number of
that have a right to this future inherit
we have reason to entertain good thoughts
God, what ever he is pleased to do with us
to other things; If God hath been gracio
us, in the choicest mercies, we should not
rain hard thoughts of him, if he with ho
remove smaller mercies; If he hath been gra
to us in distinguishing blessings, we should no
so apt to challenge God concerning these out
blessings.

3. If this is so,

Then let this engage us quietly, and patien
ly, to bear what ever afflictions God may
pleased to exercise us with. But you will say,
is a hard matter to be patient under present a
ctions, when we are in doubts concerning our
ture estate and condition; to be under trou
bles now, and not to know when an end o
these troubles shall be, this must needs be un

con-

comfortable; and therefore let this engage us,

To labour to resolve this great question, whether we are in the number of them to whom this inheritance belongs. You see it is the portion of all the Children of God; every one that is born again, that is born of God, is born to this inheritance: But I shall speak more to this, when I shall speak to that part of the text, of being made meet; and thus, we may know it, by examining the work of grace in our own hearts: But because I shall insist on that afterwards, I shall leave it now; Now those that have once resolved this querie, it becomes them to be patient in bearing what God doth exercise them with: Consider how patient God hath been towards us, shall we be impatient towards him? and let us consider, our future comforts, and they will more than sufficiently recompence all our present sufferings, *I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time; are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.* 8. *Rom.* 18.

Nay, how helpful and how conduceable, is this quietness of Spirit, to fit us for this Inheritance? But you will say, What is it to be quiet and patient under the hand of God,

Ans. It is not every kind of stillness of spirit; there may be a stupidness and blockishness of Spirit: therefore in one word, to be patient under afflictions, doth not exclude a sense of affliction, but a dejection of spirit under afflictions; You find, 5. *Jer.* 3. that God complains of his ancient people, *though he had smitten them, yet they would not receive correction: O Lord, are not thy eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but*

they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder then a rock, they have refused to return.

God had spoken to them by the voice of mercy, that was a still voice, they turned a deaf ear to that Language: God spake to them in a louder Language, by the voice of Judgements. Now God takes it ill that this would not awaken them; We should be sensible of afflictions, and not cast down by affliction; it is the middle way between these extreams, insensibleness, and dejection.

2. Though it does exclude dejection under afflictions, yet it doth not exclude humiliation for sin: The People of God that have the most experience of their sincerity, being sensible of the hand of God upon them, must be careful to humble themselves, *Humble your selves under the mighty hand of God.*

3. It doth not exclude a desire to have afflictions removed, but rather increases a desire to have them sanctified. Some are all for ease; but a gracious Person would have the sore cured, before the plaister be taken off, he would not be excluded from a course of Phisick, till he finds Spiritual health; afflictions are Gods Spiritual Medicines.

4. Again, to be patient under Gods afflicting hand, does not silence prayer, but silenceth peremptoriness in prayer; it makes us submissive in our prayers to God, *Father if it be possible let this cup pass, yet nevertheless not my will but thine be done.*

If God see it good, if it may make for his glory, God will intrust us with these mercies he at present deprives us of.

5. Farther, it doth not cause us to neglect means, but it restrains us from the use of unwarrantable means; how many in times of danger, if they can but shift off danger, though they run their souls into danger by it, they care not? but patience keeps the soul in an even frame, between those two extreams; it neither doth neglect those means that God hath appointed, nor dare it break Gods fence, nor trample down his hedge, to escape danger; that is the word by which the New Testament describes sin, *παρασις*, transgression, a breaking of Gods fence.

6. Lastly, It doth not hinder the soul from duty, but it quickens it unto duty, and does inlivet it in duty: such a frame of spirit does very much become them, who are able in any measure to clear up their title to this Inheritance. I have spoken now only in the general. What ever the condition of Gods people may be for the present, yet, this is their advantage, they have an Inheritance for the future.

The second Doctrine is this,

2. Doct. *That this inheritance of the Saints is no mean, slight, nor contemptible matter, but it is an excellent and glorious inheritance.*

It is called an inheritance in light, and for the persons to whom it belongs, it is peculiar to the Saints: Observe the manner of S. *Pauls* speaking of it, he cannot so much as mention it without a holy kind of admiration, *Giving thanks to God which hath made us meet to*

be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints
Now all these expressions do
high esteem that S. *Paul* had of
it is in his esteem a mercy more
and the partaking of it, a mercy
mercies; and of the speaking of
be a thing so admirable, what will
sion of it be? I shall a little in general
come to particulars, see before you
the excellency of this inheritance.

1. Consider those Emblems by which
Scripture describes it; it is called a heavenly
any: thus you have it, 11. *Heb.* 16. *But*
Country: they looked for a better Country
mentioned twice in the *Hebrews*; it is in
rison of the Land of *Canaan*, which was
heritance that God bestowed upon his
old; but the inheritance that God hath
for his people hereafter, is said to be
venly, and a far better Country. *Canaan*
Country that God did wonderfully bless
consult Scripture, and Geographers
most a miracle, that so small a spot of
should contain such a vast number of
you read in the Scripture it did, the extent
being so little. Sometimes it is called
a City; and Cities of old, were places
nency, both for strength, and beauty: it is
the City of the living God, and the heavenly Jerusalem, 12. *Heb.* 22. and to have not only an
Country, but a heavenly City, this is a higher
pression, Sometimes it is called
dome, 12. *Luke* 32. *Fear not little flock;*
Fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdome

Now

Now in a City there may be several ranks of men, one may be great, another may be mean; One may be in a full condition, another may be in an indigent estate: So it is in all earthly Kingdoms too; but here all are Kings, every godly soul is a King, and a Priest to God, in this Kingdom, 12. Luke 32. *It is given* in common to the people of God, and therefore they are stiled *Kings and Priests to God*, 1. Rev. 6.

Now what preferment can be greater then a Kings? this is the highest step of honour among men; What a Kingdom is here? and what Kings are these? Angels are attendants upon these Kings, *they are Ministring Spirits sent forth for the good of the elect*, 1. Heb. 14.

Nay, these servants of God who are stiled Kings, shall Judge the world, yea, the Angels themselves shall be Judged by them, the evil Angels, 1 Cor. 6, 7. What greater or what manner of enjoyments can be imagined, that is not in this Kingdom, There are *Rivers of pleasure at their right hand for ever*, 16. Psalm. the last verse. Sometimes it's set forth by a *Crown of righteousness*, that *recompence of reward Moses* had an eye unto, 11. Heb. 26. This recompence doth not signifie any desert on mans part, but abundant kindness on Gods part: Even in the Covenant of works, there was no proportion between the work that God required, and the recompence that God promised; The work that God required of *Adam* was finite, but the recompence that God promised was infinite; the everlasting enjoyment of himself. Alas, we poor creatures can deserve nothing at the hands of God, but wrath: Could

we live in the greatest exactness of obedience now, that we might have done in a state of Innocency; yet, when we had done our All, we had been but unprofitable servants, our righteousness could not have reached God, we could not have made him our debtor; Alass, he is infinitely above the sins, and the services of his poor Creatures: but it only shews the greatness of his bounty. This is the first, The Emblems by which it is described; I have given you some of many; It is a Country, a City, a Kingdom, a Crown, a Crown of Glory.

2. Consider the transcendent excellency of this inheritance. I shall instance only in some few of many, and before I begin to speak particularly of these excellencies, Consider, they are such as when we have said all we can, all is but a dark representation of them; 'Tis true the excellency of this inheritance is, that it is so perfect and full, that there is neither the mixture of any evil, to allay the comfort of that blessed state, nor any interruption by any adversary to disturb the enjoyment of it. These are great advantages; They who are in the full possession of this inheritance, are not only above the reach of enemies, but above the capacity of sinning; and in this respect we are far above the estate of Adam in innocency; for then we had mutable natures, though we might have enjoyed very much, yet we might have lost, and did loose all; but this inheritance is more sure; it is an inheritance established upon surer promises. You read, *We shall follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goes*, and we shall see *God face to face, and know him as we are known*

know of him. Alas, now we know but in part, and enjoy but in part: what we have, is but little of what God intends; some small foretasts.

And then Consider, it is not only thus full, but it is likewise eternal, and *for ever*, without any succession; there is no defect in it, no expiration of it; *it fades not away*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. And though it be distributed to many; yet, this distribution does not at all diminish the comforts of it; for such is the infinite fulness of God, that he can never be exhausted. Though thousands of Vessels be thrown into the sea together, yet there is enough in the sea to fill them all, and one hath never the less, because the other is full besides; every one is brim full: So those that speak of the degrees of glory, they say every one is as full of glory as they can receive. But to instance in particulars, would be too large, and therefore I shall only speak in general concerning the transcendent excellencies of this inheritance: It is such as exceeds all resemblance: Could we extract the sweetness, that is in all Creature excellencies, and summe them up all into one; Nay, did all these meet in one person, without the least mixture of any evil, and without the least interruption, or disturbance, yet all these were but very weak resemblances; Nay, it doth not only exceed all comparison, but it goes beyond all expressions. You find when the Apostle speaks of this inheritance, 1. *Ephes.* 18. he heaps up expression upon expression, looking upon all expressions to be insufficient; *The eyes of your understanding being enlightned: that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what*

the

the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the

It is reported of S. *Austin*, upon the loss of a good friend, (it was upon the death of S. [illegible]) he comforted himself in the loss of him by setting down, and meditating upon the joys of heaven; and when he laboured to set forth the excellency of those comforts in his meditation, he thought he heard a voice telling him, he could as soon empty the sea with a spoon, as declare the excellency, and greatness of those joys. We find in the 64. *Isa.* God himself tells us, that they are such *as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, but that is not all*, they do not only exceed all expressions but all conceptions; our words may be high, but our thoughts may be beyond what our words can express, but they exceed our thoughts, *It hath not entered into the heart of man.*

When *David* speaks of them, he speaks by way of admiration, *How great is that goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, Psal.* [illegible]

It is greater than I am able to express, greater than I am able to think. Nay, God doth more than himself, 3. *Ephes.* 20. to be a God that doth more for his people beyond what they can ask or think. Now, our raised thoughts, and apprehensions when they come up to their highest pitch, do not reach the excellency of those enjoyments. 1. *Epist. S. John* 3. 2. *Behold, says S. John what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God?*

He is astonished at what God hath done already; *Behold what manner*, &c. but yet says he, We know not what we shall be; S. John was that

Disciple

This lay in the bosome of Christ, that had many singular discoveries made to him, but says he, We know what we shall be; nay, let me take one word more, it is not only beyond all comparison, and all expressions, and all apprehensions, but the transcendency of this inheritance is such, as is beyond all Scripture Revelations, for you may find it is stiled a glory that shall be revealed in us, 8. *Rom.* 18. *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.*

That is, revealed fully, Indeed God hath revealed enough of it already, to make every thing in this world contemptible, and to cause us to have mean thoughts of all things else; but the full and perfect discovering of this inheritance, is reserved for another world: we know not what we shall be, but this we know; we shall know him as we are known of him, and see him as he is, 1 *Thes.* 1. 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*

That is the second Argument.

3. The excellency of this inheritance may further appear if you consider the concurrance of all things that may strengthen the title of Gods people to this inheritance: Reckon up all the titles that can be to any estate, and all meet in this inheritance; Do any claim a right to any inheritance by way of gift; This is the gift of God, *Luke* 12. 32.

Do any claim a right by way of purchase? This is the puchase of Christ, 1 *Ephes.* 14. it's called *the purchased possession.*

Do

Do any claim a right by way of Conquest? Christ hath conquered all those enemies that might keep Gods people from it.

Do any claim a right by way of Inheritance? It is theirs by succession, for they are the children of God. If any have a title to an inheritance by any of these respects singly, if their title be right their inheritance is secure; but here is a concurrence of all those belonging to the people of God: this inheritance is the gift of God, the purchase of Christ, conquest of Christ, and it is theirs by succession.

4. Consider, the admirable certainty of possessing this inheritance: God hath promised it. *He is faithful is he that hath promised. My father is greater then all.* No power can ever match him. *My father is greater then all and none can pluck out of his hands.*

He hath undertaken, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *That they shall be kept by his power, through faith unto salvation.* They shall be kept, and kept by the mighty power of God, & kept from danger, so long as there is any thing of danger remains; they shall be kept till they are landed in that blessed inheritance: It is Gods promise, 13. *Heb.* 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

The words in the Greek are very emphatical, Οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω, he hath said I will *never leave thee*, &c. which God ascertains by no less then five Negative Particles.

And if God hath said it, it is not for us to question it, The *Pythagoreans* had so much reverence to their Master, that they lookt upon it as too much arrogancy to question his dictates.

1. Phil.

1. *Phil.* 6. *He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.*

Where God hath once laid the foundation of grace, he will carry on the superstructure, when God hath brought home any soul to himself, he will take care of that soul; it is his promise it is his Covenant.

And so much in general for the second Observation, the excellency of this Inheritance ---- For Application, I shall only insist on one or two things.

Is it so, That this inheritance is no mean, no slight, no contemptible thing, is it so admirable that it exceeds all comparison, all expression, all conception, all Scripture revelation? Then, This may inform us, how well it is with the people of God in this regard, let it go never so ill with them in other things; there is enough in this single Meditation to render their condition lovely, above the condition of all others: Who would not chuse the estate of poor *Lazarus* rather then rich *Dives*: who would not chuse the estate of *Job* upon the dung-hill, rather then *Pharaoh* upon the Throne: who would not rather be in any kind of condition here (so they may but obtain this blessed condition hereafter), then enjoy all the delights and advantages of this world, and be deprived of, or come short of this inheritance? Certainly there is enough in this single meditation to support the hearts of the people of God in their greatest trials and troubles.

Are all the sincere people of God intitled to such an inheritance? and shall they most certainly

ness

ly be poſſeſſed of this inheritance; but they
ſo ſure a foundation, and is it in ſo ſure a
though they have enemies without them,
enemies within them, inraged enemies,
enemies, enemies that continually endeavour
overthrow them, yet are they ſo ſure
ty, that they ſhall at laſt poſſeſs ſuch an
ance? this ſpeaks their condition to be
good.

2. This may inform us, what cauſe we
to be aſhamed, and to ſtand amazed at our
& others neglects of this inheritance? is there
a thing as this to be obtained? and yet how
the generality of men beſtow their time
trifles, and vanities, and how little luſt
heritance of their time or thoughts? May
expoſtulate with the profeſſours of our
he did with the profeſſours of old, *Why*
ſpend your money for that which is not
your labour for that which profiteth not?

Since there is ſuch fulneſs of happineſs
had, why do we buſie our ſelves ſo much
things of an inferiour nature? we have
be amazed at others, thoſe that hear of
and the glory of another world, that they
live in a continual neglect of theſe things;
what cauſe have we to be aſtoniſhed at
ſelves? we that are acquainted with ſuch
joyments, and yet are ſo ſlight in our
yours after them: Alaſs, amongſt thoſe
profeſs the name of God, how few mind
inheritance, with that earneſtneſs as they
other things? Do they live as thoſe that

con-

convinced that heaven is such an inheritance as hath been related? Alass, is not this to despise the greatest of blessings? Therefore a little to awaken us out of our Spiritual Lethargy, and to make us more serious, and intent about the things of heaven, I shall only propound one or two Arguments.

Consider what it is you neglect; It is said of the Jews, *had they known him they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*; had they known him to have been the Lord of glory, they would not have Crucified him: so may I say, did we know what it is we despise, we would not thus despise it as we do, You read of the wise Merchant, 13. *Matth.* 45. *He no sooner heard of the Pearl of great price, but he sold all he had and bought it*, he was willing to part with all so he might but purchase the Pearl: Is it not strange, that the discovery of *those things which God hath laid up for his people in the other world*, hath not the same effect upon us? Consider what it is you despise, and then you cannot but wonder at your selves, while you behold others distracting their thoughts, breaking their sleep, and filling their hearts with cares, and are restless for the things of this world: Nay, are out-stript by you, as to your endevours and cares for those things that are so far transcendent, and so admirable. Shall they take more pains for perishing comforts, then you do for everlasting mercies? Consider but this one thing; The glory in this inheritance that God will put upon the very bodies of his People, and Consider the glory in this inheritance

ritance that God intends to put upon the
his People.

1. The glorious excellencies, and
ons that God intends to put upon the
of his People; they are now ſtiled
dies, *corruptible bodies*, 1 *Corinth.* 15.
44. ſpeaking of the bodies of the
Though it be ſown in corruption it ſhall
ſed in incorruption, Theſe poor bodies
ours, are now fading and withering
All fleſh is graſs, and the goodlineſs
of as the flower of the field; the graſs
eth, the flower fadeth, but the word of the
endureth for ever.

What more periſhing then the gra
the art in the world cannot long pre
theſe poor tabernacles of clay; they
moulder into duſt. It was a vain bra
proud *Paracelſus*, that he could make ma
mortal, but God convinc'd him of his
for he died in the ſtrength of his
Now, though it be a withering dying bo
paper building, that muſt be diſſolved;
it be ſown a corruptible body, it ſhall be
ſed in incorruption: now what an admi
change is this?

It is now a *vile body*; that is another
preſſion in the 43 *verſ.* It is *ſown a vile*
it is raiſed in honour: it is vile in reſpect
thoſe many diſtempers, and noiſome dife
and frailties, this poor fleſh of ours is ſubj
to, but it ſhall be raiſed in glory. Cou
if *Moſes* had ſuch glory upon his face, wh

he had been conversing with God upon the mount, what glory will God then put upon these poor bodies of his People, when they shall enjoy him so fully, Consider that of *Moses* in the 34. *Exod.* 30.

So when *Steven* was arraigned as a Malefactour, at the bar of Justice, *they saw the glory of God shining upon him*, 6. *Act.* 16. Thus you read of *Daniel* 12. *Dan.* 3. *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.*

A third expression, you have 44. *vers.* It *is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*: here is a seeming contradiction in the terms, if a body, it is no more spiritual if spiritual it is no more a body: for a full understanding of this, a learned expositour gives these his thoughts, we shall never comprehend what this means till we come fully to injoy it; but thus far we may safely speak, it shall be raised a spiritual body; that is, free from all natural dependencies; Alas, how many props do these poor bodies need, for their support, how many Creatures loose their lives to maintain ours, in this respect all our Creature dependencies shall then be removed, God will take away our crutches; Yes, and our lameness also: it shall be raised a spiritual body.

All the art in the world cannot preserve these poor bodies from decay; nay it cannot preserve them from noisome, and destructive weaknesses, they are bodies full of weaknesses, and

under a neceſſity of many ſupports, but their corruptible bodies ſhall be raiſed in incorruption, theſe vile bodies ſhall be raiſed in glory, theſe natural bodies, ſhall be raiſed ſpiritual bodies.

This is the great honour that God will put upon the bodies of his Saints; ſuch honour have all his Saints in reſpect of their bodies; they ſhine as ſtars in the firmament.

SER.

SERMON III.

1. Coloss. 12.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.

CONsider the glory that this Inheritance doth contain in reference to the souls of the Saints. *Bernard* breaks out into this high expression, how great shall the glory of Gods people be when their very bodies shall be as glorious as the Sun, and they shall shine as the Sun in the firmament, ---- Concerning the glory of the souls of the Saints, I shall not be large in treating of that; All the faculties of their souls shall then be more inlarged and widened to receive in more of God, to take in more of happiness, then now they are capable of; our souls now are but narrow vessels in comparison of what they shall be then; the soul of man is too big a vessel for the world to fill: Whence is it, that we thus pursue the world as our only happiness? it will never satisfie us. Men wander from one creature to another, but they do not find happiness: *They seek the living among the dead*; the soul is too wide for these things to fill it: but then it shall be widened and shall

have a larger capacity then now it hath. Our understandings shall know more of God; knowledge is one of the great accomplishments of man; it sets him in a higher rank of being then other creatures: and that there is a very great excellency in knowledge, appears, because this was the bait Satan made use of; so shall you be as Gods knowing good and evil; that subtil adversary knew no bait more taking. Knowledge in it self is a most lovely and amiable thing; but in comparison of spiritual knowledge, the knowledge of God and of our selves, all other knowledge is but poor and mean. The Philosopher when he had been much admiring the knowledge of nature, did wonder that any would give way to sensual and bruitish pleasures, which they by the light of nature so much condemned. But what is this knowledge in Comparison of the knowledge of Christ? All knowledge whether Natural or Divine, is now but weak, and feeble, scant and narrow; how little doth any man know of himself, how many things are there in Nature that to this day do remain a mystery and riddle to the wisest of men: how little do we know of God? but then our knowledge shall be widened. So our wills and affections are now but narrow and weak things; they can hold but a little, but then they shall be enlarged. 1 Cor. 13. 12. *We know now but in part, and we love now but in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

Nay, not only shall all the faculties of the soul be thus widened; But all the graces of the soul shall

shall be perfected, there shall be no defect nor weakness in them, there shall be no dimness in our spiritual sight, our Wills and Affections our Love and our Joy, they shall all be full of strength: as a man is in his full strength when every member of his body comes to its ripeness and maturity, 4. *Ephes.* 13. *till we all come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* 12. *Heb.* 28. *The spirits of just men made perfect*, that is their souls: then there will be no mixture of Corruption to disturb our graces or to interrupt the exercise of them, 5. *Ephes.* 27. *That he might present it to himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing*, &c.

Alas, the spouse now acknowledgeth, though she is comely, yet withal she is very black; not onely in respect of persecution but in respect of inherent distempers; but Christ will present his Church hereafter without spot or blemish, The gold of Gods People shall then have nothing of dross in it; their wine then will have nothing of water in it, our graces and Comforts then will be both unmixt; there shall then be no halting in our obedience, our Saviour propounds this as the pattern of our prayers, that we should pray, that the will of God may be done here on earth as it is done in heaven: How is it done in heaven? perfectly, without any weakness, without any intermission. In a word there shall be neither sin, nor Satan, nor corruption, nor temptation; not a vain thought, not a wry look, nothing that may disturb

the graces, or dashen the Comforts of the Soul.

3. Consider the sweet Communion that is between the People of God and Saints and Angels. The Communion of Saints, it is a piece of heaven here upon the earth; but what will this Communion be in that blessed inheritance when we come to be fully possest of it. The Apostle mentions this, as one of the great privileges of the Gospel, 12. *Heb.* 22. *We are come to mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, &c.*

We do not now converse with God, as we did at Mount *Sinai*, but in another manner.

Doctor *Taylor* when he was a Prisoner did account it his joy that he was a fellow Prisoner with holy *Bradford*. If the Communion of Saints in prison have so much of sweetness in it, what is the Communion of Saints in glory?

Consider, we shall then have Communion not with a few onely, but with the whole Collective body of the Saints that have been in all ages, and therefore it is said, they shall *sit down with Abraham*; and to have Communion with the Patriarkes and Prophets and Apostles, and all the holy men of God that ever lived: how refreshing must this Communion needs be? Nay, then we shall have Communion with none but Saints; as with all Saints so, with none else. Alas in this world we live in the midst of a mixt multitude, and our comforts are frequently disturbed by false brethren that creep in amongst us; you know how much *Lot* was disturbed by the *Sodomites*; and sometimes they creep into

the

the very Church too. God complains in the 14. *Numb.* of a mixt multitude who were not of the same spirit with *Caleb* and *Joshua*: they were men of another spirit and followed God fully. Now how much is the sweetness of the Communion of Gods People here upon earth damped by the miscarriage of professours? how much many times does Religion suffer, and the name of God suffer, yea how much do they themselves suffer and their holy profession? but when the sheep shall be separated from the Goats, the tares from the Wheat, and the Chaff from the Corn, Communion with the Saints must then be much more delightful.

Again, it shall not only be with all the Saints but with the Saints in their perfection and highest improvement. Take the best of Saints here on earth and they have something in them that renders their Communion unlovely. It's said of *Elias* he was a man of like Passions: and the Apostles themselves when the people would have adored and worshipped them, they cryed out, do not this thing *for we are men of like passions with your selves.* The best of men have something in them to witness they are but men: take the holyest and the most improved Saint who ever lived, you find something recorded in Scripture which shews he was yet in a state of imperfection: that he was not arrived to that blessed estate that this Inheritance implies. Now to have Communion with Saints, and all Saints, and none but Saints, and Saints in their utmost and highest improvements, and in a state of perfection, this must need be very admirable.

Farther to have Communion with Saints in their highest imployments, in praising and admiring and adoring of God. To have Communion with those that are godly in civil converse, in ordinary visits is a refreshment especially in time of common calamity; how refreshing is the sight of gracious Persons? but to have Communion with them in praising and blessing God, in singing *Hallelujahs* is very pleasant. Moses thought Communion with Gods people a desirable thing in the time of affliction; therefore it is said he made it his choice, 11. *Heb.* 24. 25. *Chusing rather to suffer affliction with the People of God then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* And if it be so in a suffering Condition, what is it in a glorified state? and if in Civil matters, what is it in these Spiritual imployments?

Lastly, Such Communion with them that shall never be interrupted, as shall never expire; *they shall be for ever with the Lord:* This shall be the Portion of them all, and they shall be for ever together. In this world the company of friends is pleasant, but that which damps their refreshments is the thoughts, that there must be a parting; but there will be no intermission. Then it shall be our work and priviledge for ever. Put then all these together, to have such a glory put upon our bodies, and improvement on our souls, and to have such Communion with Saints, what a glorious estate will it be?

4. Consider that sweet Communion with God; those full enjoyments of God which he hath reserved for another world. Indeed this is the main, the highest part of this glorious Inheritance;

ritance. It is the presence of God that makes heaven what it is; it is that which fills heaven with all its happiness and unspeakable glory. *Lauber* proposeth an imagination; could we imagine that God could withdraw his presence from heaven it would cease to be heaven any longer, and it would be a dark and uncomfortable place: In the 1 *Sam.* 4.21.22. as *Phinehas* his wife said, when the Ark was taken (it was not the Child that was born or any other thing that she could take comfort in) the *glory is departed from Israel.* If God be gone all is gone: The enjoyment of God is the highest advantage that creatures are capable of. Those enjoyments of God which the Saints have here on earth are infinitely beyond all other enjoyments whatsoever. There is no comfort, no happiness like to this, and were there no other happiness but this in this life, certainly the people of God were the only happy people because they live in Communion with him: they are happier because they have enjoyments that are higher and better then others have; they have meat and drink that others know not of; therefore you read in the 16. *Psal.* 5. *The Lord is the Portion of my cup, v. 6. the lines are faln to me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage.*

He doth not envy the condition of others, he only admires the goodness of God to himself. The godly man, 1. *Psal.* 2. is declared to be the onely happy man, because he delights in the Law of God, and meditates therein day and night, 5. *Matth.* 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

And

And therefore they must needs be blessed, because they have a sight of God, 144. *Psal.* 15. *happy are the People whose God is the Lord.*

This is the constant Character of a happy man, he is one that lives in Communion with God.

I might prove by several arguments, that the best of other enjoyments, without this, are but very mean to the soul, that knows what it is to enjoy Communion with God, 84. *Psalm* 10. *A day in thy courts is better then a thousand*, &c.

David regards neither Crowns nor dignities, nor all Creature enjoyments in comparison of the enjoyment of God, 63. *Psal.* 3. *thy loving kindness is better then life*: Life of all outward blessings is the very top and highest of them, it is that which renders us capable of other comforts: says the Devil, *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life, but thy loving kindness is better then life*; the word in the Original ——— is very emphatical it is better then *lives*; that is life with all its advantages. Therefore 7. *Psal.* 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after*, &c. *to behold the beauty of the Lord*, &c. He had affectionate ardent desires; 4. *Psal.* 6. *Many say who will shew us any good*; *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*, &c. He prized this beyond Corn, Wine, and Oyl. This hath been the opinion of them concerning Communion with God, who have had most acquaintance with him, and they are in matters of this nature to be most credited. To live in this world, and to live as they in the 2. *Ephes.* 12. *without God in the world*, is a poor kind of living, though they live

health honours, and the enjoyments of all other kinds of comforts. *Abraham* (when he confirmed Gods promise) was not unsensible of all the kindness he received from God but he looked upon all as little, unless he had the promise of a Sonne made good to him, *What is all this if I get Children?*: much more may it be said, if God gives us never so much of all other enjoyments and yet hide his face, that soul that understands it self, cannot but be troubled: there is enough in the want of this single mercy to imbitter all other comforts and all other mercies, and little comfort to be enjoyed in all our enjoyments, unless withal we may enjoy Communion with God.

Another argument is this, The worst of afflictions will become easie and tolerable; yea, sweet and pleasant to them that have the presence of God to sweeten their afflictions: where can I be well without thee saith *Bernard*? How can I be ill with thee? while I enjoy Communion with thee? He says of Creature comforts they are little, if we look at the priviledge of enjoying communion with God: the reason is because there is infinitely more in God then in all Creatures. How can he be poor who hath him for his Portion in whom are all riches, who is all things? How can he be in want that doth not want the light of Gods Countenance which is infinitely better then Corn, Wine, and Oyl.

What are the worlds frowns if God smiles?

What though men condemn us if God justifie us? What though men be against us if God be but for us? That answers all, 3. *Habbac* 17, 18.

Though

Though the fig-tree shall not blossom yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, &c. The Prophet propounds as sad a case as can be imagined, yet says he, *we will rejoyce in the Lord, we will joy in the God of our salvation.* 23. *Psal.* 4. *Though I walk through the valley* (though it be through the valley of death, that dark and uncomfortable valley) *I will fear no evil for thou art with me.* The three Children in the fiery furnace were in no sad condition because God was with them: the Apostles in their sufferings thought this enough, for their support. 2 *Cor.* 4, 9. *persecuted but not forsaken.* S. Paul (*Though all forsook him yet God standing by him*) thought he had enough; *persecuted but not forsaken cast down but not in despair.*

When Christ was sending out his Disciples upon that difficult imployment to plant the Gospel in the world, he tells them that they must expect to meet with opposition, but he gives them this for their comfort, I will be with you, *Go teach all nations, baptizing them, and lo I am with you to the end of the world.*

And there is enough in that promise to bear them up above all discouragements. This was the great request of *Moses*, 33. *Exod.* 15. So all that have had any sense of their Spiritual concernments have expresst this to be their great desire. *Moses* said *if thy presence go not with us carry us not up hence.* They were now in a wilderness, compassed about with difficulties and dangers on every side, but if thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence; though we are in a wilderness, yet we had rather have thy presence here, then to go into *Canaan* without thy presence.

2. Those

2. Those enjoyments the people of God have of him here, are very little in Comparison of those they shall have of him hereafter: what God hath reserved for his People in another world transcendently beyond other enjoyments. As all enjoyments here compared to those enjoyments, are but empty things, so all the enjoyments of God in this world, are far short of them, that they enjoy of him in the other world. Because in this world we enjoy God but Mediately, but then the people of God shall enjoy him immediately. In this world, what ever we enjoy of God it is but darkly; what ever sight of God we have it is either through the glass of the Creature, or the glass of ordinances, or the glass of experiences; through the glass of the Creatures: and thus we may see much of God, his wisdom, his power, his greatness, 19. *Psal.* 1, 2. *The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handy work.*

There are very high expressions concerning the things of Nature, how much these help us in our sight of God; But the sight of God in ordinances, is a higher sight; therefore *David*, 2. *Psal.* 1, 2. *My soul thirsteth for God for the living God, &c. That I may see thy glory:* how? *even as I have seen thee in the sanctuary:* he had never such a sight of God, as in his sanctuary, as in his ordinances; this is that which *David* highly Magnifies.

And there is the glass of experiences: these are very admirable too; See God purging out remaining corruptions, carrying on the work of grace in the heart, and setting up his kingdom in the soul: *To taste and see how good and gracious he is,*

and

and to have an inward sense of these spiritual refreshments, these are high and glorious things but to see God face, to face to see him as he is,

2. It shall be more full and perfect; in this world they are but imperfect, God shews us his back part, as he did *Moses*, 33. *Ex.* 23. and in the 1 *Cor.* 13. 9. *We know but in part, then we shall see him as he is*, 1 *John* 3, 2. These are faculties by which especially we shall then enjoy Communion with God, our understandings, wills, and affections; In this world our understandings are dim, we see but little of God, we are short sighted, but then, 33. *Isaiah* 17. *thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty.*

Now they see the land afar off but then they shall see the king in his beauty, see him on his throne in his glory; this must needs be an excellent sight indeed. All our knowledge of God here is one of these three ways, as the Schools tell us, by way of Causality, Negation, or by way of Eminency. By way of Causality; So we consider all those excellencies which be in the Creature must needs meet in God; as all the lines in the Circumference meet in the Center, and all the Rays and shinings in the air meet together in the Sun, as the common fountain.

So by way of Negations separating those imperfections from God, with which every excellency is clog'd in the Creature. As for example Wisdom and Power; there is much of folly mixt with humane wisdom: and much of weakness mixt with created power. Though there are some attributes of God that we call incommunicable as the Infiniteness, unchangablenes and Eternity of God.

Their

Then by way of eminency, what ever excellencies is in creatures, all these meet in God, separated and refined from every thing of imperfection; but that is not all, they are in God in an infinite and transcendent way; and though there be much of this kind of knowledge of God here, yet *to know God as he is, to see him face to face*, how much more refreshing must this be!

And so for our wills and affections: Now our love is weak, our delight is weak: Now we are apt to love God for our selves, but then we shall love God for himself, and all things else for him. What a different excellency is there in that temper, above what we now do attain unto: It is but in some degree here, but it shall be in a state of perfection.

3. They shall then be more constant in this world though they have sometimes a bright sun shine day, yet at other times they have a dark gloomy night: This is the condition of Gods people here, though they have the seed of grace that abides for ever, and that good part that shall never be taken from them, yet the comforts that come from thence are various and full of uncertainties: but the enjoyment of God the Father shall have no change, 1 *Thes.* 4, 17. They shall be ever with the Lord: we shall then so enjoy Communion with him, as never more to be separated from him; *therefore comfort one another with these words.*

4. Our enjoyments of God shall then be more intimate; we shall enjoy him, and nothing else but him; there shall neither be marrying nor giving in marriage, there shall neither be Sun, Moon,

Moon, nor Stars; we shall then be as the Angels of God, there shall be no need of these things, Rev. 21. 23. *No sun, nor moon, nor stars to lighten in: The lamb shall be the brightness thereof*; God *shall then be all in all*: there shall then be no unclean thing, No *Cain* to kill, No *Sodomites* to vex, No *Ishmael* to scoff, No *Rabshakeh* to revile, No *Herod* to persecute, No *Judas* to betray.

5. Our enjoyments of God shall then be without any thing of weariness; *Now though the spirit is willing, yet the flesh is weak: What could you not watch with me one hour?* If we be but a few hours engaged in the service of God, how soon do our spirits flag? our affections grow dull? but then there shall be no such thing as weariness. The souls of Gods People then shall be raised up to a greater fitness for those sublime and high pieces of service; the singing praises and *Hallelujahs*. That is the first Argument.

2. Consider what we do in slighting and undervaluing this glorious Inheritance.

1. We most unworthily requite the glorious love that ever was or can be imagined. Does God so expostulate with his people of *Israel*, because of their ingratitude for outward preservations and deliverances, those outward mercies bestowed upon them, 32. *Deuter.* 6. *Do you thus requite the Lord?* May not God much more expostulate with us in respect of these greater mercies? do you thus requite the Lord, *O foolish and unwise?*

Hath God been so gracious to us, as to take care

care of our souls, and of our everlasting welfare, and shall we thus requite him? Our engagements for Common mercies are great, but our engagements for these mercies, how much greater are they?

Consider what a mercy it is that there should be a possibility of our obtaining this Inheritance. We who in our natural constitution are but one step from hell, and everlasting flames; and between us, and it there is nothing but a brittle and uncertain life; What astonishing love is this, *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.* John 16. 1 John 3. 5.

Now, how disingenuous and unworthy is it in us to slight and undervalue these high discoveries of love.

Again, Consider what a mercy it is not only that heaven is become possible, but also that God vouchsafes us this priviledge to discover the excellency of heaven to us, with means for the obtaining of heaven, and his blessing upon the means, that by all we might be made meet to partake of this Inheritance. These are mercies that God doth not vouchsafe to all men, 147 *Psal.* 19, 20. *He hath not dealt so with other nations.*

Farther, not only is this inheritance possible, and a discovery made of it, and means afforded for the obtaining it, But God gives us also many incouragements to make use of these means: this Inheritance is not only purchased but proffered and tendered: if we are willing to accept, and do not refuse it, God will bestow it. Nay, God doth not only proffer it but he importunes our acceptance of it: how often doth Christ perswade,

swade, and perswade with a great deal of importunity, that you would accept of this Inheritance, *I have stretched out my hand all the long to a gainsaying people.*

Farther the terms upon which he encourageth us, are only upon the account of free-grace; Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely, *Come buy wine and milk without money and without price*, 55. *Isaiah.* God only requires us to bring a sense of our wants, and what a most unworthy requital is this of the love and kindness of God, to undervalue this Inheritance?

2. We hereby render our selves (so far as we undervalue these mercies) so far uncapable of partaking of them. It was said of the *Jews*, they thrust away the kingdom of heaven from them, 13. *Acts* 46. That is, as *Beza* upon the place observes, their carriage and contempt did declare them unworthy. 22. *Matth.* Christ sent forth his messengers to invite to the wedding feast. The Guests were indeed Invited but they all made light of it: What was the Issue? *The King sent his servants to call in other guests.* God will first bring us to prize these mercies before he vouchsafe them.

3. They who slight these mercies bring themselves under an absolute necessity of perishing, 2. *Heb.* 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.* If we refuse this inheritance we undo our selves for ever.

Quest. *But what kind of neglect is it that doth deprive us of this Inheritance?*

Answ. When the neglect is total, and we prefer the world so much above it that we only mind

mind the things thereof: As that rich man, 12. *Luke*, minded his barns, his In-comes, but his soul he cared not for, *verſ.* 19, 20, 21. So when we prefer any thing above it, 10. *Matt.* 37. *He that loveth father or mother more then me is not worthy of me.*

This was *Eſaus* great ſin, his profaneneſs, his ſelling his birth-right for a meſs of pottage; and when we ſo neglect it that we are not willing to undergo any thing for it, or deny our ſelves any thing in order to it, we are rendered all together uncapable of this Inheritance; There are other neglects through weakneſs, and they are ſuch as the people of God are incident unto; as ſins of infirmities: As when they do not pray with that fervency, and ſtrive with that earneſtneſs, for that kingdom of heaven which is ſet before them, as becomes the excellency of theſe things. Now this kind of carriage may give us cauſe of ſhame and trouble, but doth not cut off our right. That is the ſecond, Conſider what we ſlight, and what we do in undervaluing theſe mercies.

3. Conſider for what it is that we ſo much undervalue this glorious Inheritance. No man doth ſlight this, but it is in order to the ſecuring of other enjoyments. Now what enjoyments are there like theſe? If there were any better then theſe, then this practice were Juſtifiable. Nay, if there were any enjoyments equally as good as theſe, then theſe neglects were excuſable; but in as much as none are to be compared with theſe, this is that beſpeaks theſe neglects (though but in part) without excuſe. Now what ſhould

tempt us to a neglect of these glorious things? can we expect to meet with that in sin, or in Creature and outward comforts? can we expect that the world should be so sweet, as to countervail the loss of them? Our ease, our safety (I might instance in all outward things) alas, these things are but vain while they do continue, and it is but for a moment that they can continue, and there can be nothing of satisfaction found in them, they are but such mercies as God bestows upon the worst of men, and they are useless in our straits, and therefore why should these clog us in our pursuits after greater matters.

Use of Direction, What shall we do that we may shake off that sluggishness, and get above that dullness of Spirit, that is usually in us, in our pursuit after matters that do so highly concern us?

1. *Direct.* Consider, how much it is your duty and concernment to bestow your utmost earnestness there. It was the commendation of John Baptists hearers, 11. *Matth. from the days of* John *the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.* So it is our Saviours advise, *strive to enter in at the strait gate*, Striving denotes our utmost earnestness: it is not endeavours alone, nor is it earnestness for a time, but it must be a constant earnestness, a fixed course in pursuing this glorious Inheritance.

2. *Direction*, Be much in the great duty of Meditation: there are many advantages in it: It gives all kind of truths a free passage into our hearts.

There-

Therefore by Meditation we should be often taking a view of this glorious Inheritance; as *Moses* went up to the top of *Pisgah*, and from thence took a view of the promised Land, so we should often by Meditation take a view of all those excellencies. It was the advice of a learned writer concerning meetness for eternity; Says he, if you would be serious in preparing for Eternity, do but spend one quarter of an hour every day in considering what Eternity is. If you would be more lively and vigorous in your prayers and endeavours, be frequent in considering what it is you strive for.

Again, Meditation is admirable not only to inspire the excellency of this Inheritance upon the hearts, but also to preserve those apprehensions that we have of this glorious Inheritance already. Now that this may inflame our souls with love to God, & in that God hath not only made provision for us in this life, but for Eternity, and such a glorious Inheritance as this is; we should be often meditating on this for these ends:

1. That these Meditations might quicken us in our obedience. When *David* had considered how many and how great were the mercies of God to him, he sits down and says, What shall I render to the Lord for all his goodness and loving kindnesse to me? Alas I can do is too little, I can never think any thing too much, for that God to whom I owe so much; Nor am I ever able to perform any thing suitable to such mercies. These meditations did so engage the hearts of the ancient Martyrs, that some grieved that they had no

no more lives to loose for God. Another professed the only pride that he took in learning was, that he had something to dispise and disesteem, and account nothing in comparison of Jesus Christ. Hath God a regard to our Eternal good? Consider but this, and this will be helpful to quicken us in our obedience, and to make us think that we can never sufficiently express ourselves thankful.

2. The meditation of this glorious Inheritance is useful for the strengthening of patience in sufferings. Though we are now passing through a wilderness, if we have but a sight of Canaan, a *Pisgah* sight of *Canaan*, it will bear up our faith from sinking under discouragements. With what resolutions would this Arm us, as it did the Apostles? It made them make light of Afflictions. *Our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* This made them despise all manner of afflictions, their meditation was fixt here; He fears no danger that sets heaven in his eye.

3. It is very useful to render what ever is either directly in its own nature, or any other way endangering this Inheritance, to render it hateful, as all our sins do. Do but think what large provisions God hath made for his People, that nothing can keep them off from those mercies but their sins. These Meditations are very helpful to imbitter the thoughts of sin. Consider, the distance that is between God and our Souls already is of sins making, and in reference to our everlasting welfare, it is only sin makes the danger;

ger: What ever diverts us from minding the things of heaven, it makes them inconsiderable. Meditate upon these things, and it will render the world a vain thing; and the allurements of the flesh contemptible and all outward things inconsiderable.

4. These Meditations are useful to arm us against all dangers, 1 *Thes.* 5. 8. *putting on the breast plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.* Do but set heaven before your eyes, and let your Meditations be much upon that, and think of that as yours, and you will think all things else but very little. The reason why afflictions seem so great, and outward comforts so great a matter, is because these greater matters are so little in our esteem.

SERMON IV.

Isaiah, cap. 8. vers. 17.

I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

THese words contain the Prophets resolution, how to carry himself in that time of *Jacobs* trouble, and therein an excellent pattern for our imitation. The particular time to which these words refer, was a dark and gloomy season, a day of rebuke and blasphemy; many black clouds were already gathered over the heads of Gods people; two neighbouring Kings combine against them, and by their united strength design the ruine of *Jerusalem*, the King of *Syria* and the King of *Israel*. *Cap.* 7. 1, 2, 6. In this their distress, so tender was God not onely of the safety, but of the comfort of his people, that no sooner do they discern their dangers, but he lets them know their deliverance: for upon this very message he sends the Prophet, *Cap.* 7. *vers.* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and for the strengthening of their faith in believing these glad tidings, God gives them many assurances of the certainty thereof, both in the former

Chapter

Chapter and in this. In the beginning of this Chapter the Prophet by the name of his Son *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* (the signification of which name is rendred in the Margin) declares the speedy destruction of their enemies. Whether these things were transacted in a vision onely, as those in *Hosea*, cap. 1. or whether they were real, is not material to determine. Thus much is clear, that their deliverance by the King of Assyria falling upon their adversaries, is foretold as within a little time to be accomplished, *vers.* 4. and so strong was the Prophets faith in crediting these signs of their deliverance, that *vers.* 9. he turns his speech to the enemies aforementioned, letting them know the vanity of their combinations, and the fruitlesness of their attempts, because God was with his people, *v.* 10. He speaks to the people of God themselves dissuading them from two things. First, from seeking safety by unwarrantable and sinful confederacies, either with the Assyrian or any other Nation, *vers.* 12. Such confederacies, though they had been frequent, had never been successful, but always to their prejudice. Secondly, from timorousness because of approaching dangers, *vers.* 12. As a remedy against these fears, he propounds the fear of God, *vers.* 13. the more they fear'd him, the less would they fear others. And to encourage them to make tryal of this remedy, he tells the advantage of it, *vers.* 14. he will be a sanctuary, *i.e.* a refuge, a shelter an hiding place, a place of retreat and safety. Thus God promises, Isa. 41. 16. and by these apprehensions of God the Church overcomes all

her

her fears, *Psal. 46. vers.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The Prophet having shewn what God will be to his people, shews in the same verse, what God will be to others, even to such in *Israel* and *Judah* as refus'd to be ruled by him or rely upon him. But because the Prophet found so little success among the generality of this people, God commands him, *vers.* 16. to bind up the testimony, and seal the Law among his disciples; thereby intimating (as some think) that he would not have the Prophet deal further with those faithless and prophane scoffers, but reserve those sacred mysteries of the Messiah, to be imparted to the faithful, who would with due reverence embrace them. Sealing was used of old either for secrecy, as men seal letters, or for safety as Merchants seal Wares, or for certainty as men seal contracts, or for authority as Princes and Commanders Seal commissions. Now in these words follows the Prophets resolution, what he would do in the interim, till deliverance should come; Some Interpret these words as spoken by Christ in regard of the verse following, Others think them a Parenthesis declaring the Prophets resolution what course he would take in that day of *Judah's* trouble. *I will wait*, &c.

In the words are these two particulars.

1. The condition or posture of the Church of God at that time.

The persons here spoken of are said to be the house of *Jacob*, *i.e.* the family, the stock, the lineage of *Jacob*, sometimes stiled the house of *Israel*, sometimes the house of *David*, *Isaiah* 7. *i. e.* Gods peculiar people, not onely those who

by

by natural descent came from *Jacob*, but those who succeeded him in faith, &c. Thus the word is used in the Gospel to signifie the Church and people of God.

The posture these persons were in. God had hid his face, and when the Sun is Eclipsed, the world must needs be dark: It was now a gloomy season. God deals with them as *David* deale with *Absalom*, 2 *Sam.* 14. 24. He would not permit him to see his face: The phrase denotes Gods withdrawing his favour in any kind; for the face of God frequently signifies his favour, the beholding his face, the enjoyment of his favour, the withdrawing his favour the hiding of his face, *Numb.* 6. 25, 26. *Psal.* 11. 7. *Psal.* 10. 1. *Psal.* 17. 15.

2. The Exemplary carriage of the Prophet in this sad posture of the Church, and this is expressed by two words: I will wait upon the Lord, I will look for him; both signifie the same thing, *viz.* an earnest longing and persevering expectation of deliverance.

From the words thus opened, arise these two Doctrinal conclusions.

1. Doct. *That God does sometimes hide his face from them who are the Objects of his favour.*

2. Doct. *That when God does hide his face from his people, the great work and business which then lies before them, is to wait upon the Lord, to look for him.*

1. Doct. *That God does sometimes hide his face from them who are the Objects of his favour.* A full instance of this we have here, What people

were

were there at that time in all the world so dear to God? or in whose welfare he accounted himself so highly concerned, as the house of Jacob? and yet these are the people from whom God had hid his face. Consider, but these three things concerning this people, and it will appear that above all people, these were the people of his delight and complacency.

1. The wonderful dispensations of God towards this people in times past; when ordinary providences were not sufficient, either for their supply or safety, God was pleased by miracles to preserve them, and provide for them: when there was no other way of escaping their enemies, God makes a way for them through the Red-sea; when the barren earth could not afford them food in the wilderness, God sends them food from heaven; he rains down bread into all their Quarters.

2. The peculiar and Covenant-relation, this people stood in to God for the time present: they were *the people of his choice*, Psalm 105. 6. Psalm 135. 4. *The people of his love*, Psal. 47. 4. *A people that God had taken into Covenant with himself, and therefore unto whom he did the more like this*, Deut. 4. 7. Rom. 9. 23. 24.

3. The promises God had made to this people for the time to come: *To them pertained the adoption, the glory, the Covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of God, and the promises*, Rom. 9. 4. In expectation of having these promises accomplished, the Prophet here resolves to wait. But yet notwithstanding all these endearments, these are the people from whom God is here said to hide

hide his face. It is sometimes the case of particular persons, as appears from their doleful complaints, *Psal.* 10. 1. *Psal.* 13. 1. 'tis here the case of a whole nation, not of the mixed multitude onely, but of the whole body of that people, a clear instance that God sometimes hides his face from them who are the Objects of his favour.

For clearing and confirming this Doctrine, four things are needful to be spoke to.

1. What it is for God to hide his face, or what this phrase implys.
2. How far it is that God does hide his face from his people.
3. The reasons for which God hides his face from them.
4. The unconstortableness of such a conditions

1. What it is for God to hide his face: In answer to which consider,

1. That God does sometimes hide his face from his Church in general. And that

1. When he removes the wonted tokens and pledges of his love in any measure, he then hides his face; when he does not manifest himself as formerly; when his people have not those evidences and testimonies of his gracious presence, as at other times: As when God strips his people of the means of Communion with himself; when he sends among them a *famine, not of bread, nor of water, but of his word*; when *he drives their teachers into corners*; when he permits *the ark to be carried away from them*, as it was from the people of *Israel*, 1 *Sam.* 4. 21. Though God does not totally remove our Candlestick out of

it's place: yet when he suffers the lights of the Sanctuary to be hid and obscured, this is so high a degree of Gods hiding his face, that God in compassion to his people assures them, that how severe soever he might be in other judgements, he would spare them as to this, *Isaiah* 30. 20. *Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and water of affliction, yet shall not* thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes *shall see thy teachers*. The total removing of these mercies is to unchurch and ungospel a nation, and the suspence of them for some time and in some degree is the hiding of Gods face.

2. When God takes down the hedge of his providence in part, and lets in a torrent of outward calamities upon them: This was the case of *Judah* here, God does so far let loose the *Assyrian* upon them, that their very life is endangered, *Vers.* 7, & 8. of this Chapter, *He shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck*, very near to drowning. *The only safety of Gods people* from enemies and dangers, is from the *providential care of God*; This is the wall of their defence, *Isaiah* 5. 5, *Job* 1. 10. But if this fence be taken away or broken down, they then lie open to the malice and rage of enemies. Whence is it that the Church of God which is as a Lilly among Thorns, as a flock of sheep encompassed by ravening wolves, hath any days of tranquillity in this it's military condition, but because God puts a restraint upon the rage and malice of enemies? But when God takes off these restraints, no wonder if (as here) *Israel* hereby

to

to afflict *Judah*, no wonder *if* Ephraim *be against* Manasseh, *and* Manasseh *against* Ephraim, *and both against* Judah; *I will hide my face* says God, *Deut.* 31. 17, and what follows? *They shall be devoured, many evils shall befal them, so that they will say in that day, are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us?* And as the first coming, so the long continuance of calamities is ascribed to the same cause, *Psal.* 44. 23, 24, 25, 26. *Awake, Why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression.* The providence and care of God are those flood-gates that keep out inundations of misery, but when God hides his face, these flood-gates are open, and no wonder if then the waters flow in upon us. Thus in temporal mercies God many times hides his face from his people, as under the former head was shewn in Spiritual mercies. And indeed when God hides his face in spiritual mercies, he does usually hide his face in temporal mercies. Those once famous *Asiatique* Churches spoke of *Chap.* 2. & *Chap.* 3. together with the loss of the Gospel lost all their outward prosperity. Thus, from the Church in general does God sometimes hide his face.

2. Though God does not in either of these respects hide his face from the Church in general, yet he may hide his face from believers in particular. When it is the case of the Church in general, every particular believer shares therein; when the ship is endanger'd by tempests, no ones private Cabine can be in safety. But now

in

in these respects God is said to hide his face from particular persons.

1. When he unchains Satan and enlarges his commission in any degree against us. Thus God by several steps and gradations enlarges Satans commission *against Job*. First, Against his *estate*, he gave that into his hands. Secondly, against *his relations* in putting them within his power. Thirdly, Against his *body* in permitting to afflict that. And lastly, against his *soul* in giving him liberty to tempt that. There is indeed no person free from temptations, *Adam* in innocency meets with a Serpent in Paradise; Christ in whom was no sin, was yet tempted: and as there is no person, so is there no condition free from temptation, but as our conditions change, so do our temptations change. In sickness, we meet with temptations of one kind, in want with temptations of another kind. And when Satan is stronger in tempting, and we weaker in resisting, this is an argument of Gods hiding his face. When there is not only a greater frequency but prevalency of temptations, this is a sore kind of withdrawing. To be tempted is an affliction, but to be overcome by the temptation is both our affliction and our sin. *The messenger of Satan* was an affliction to *S. Paul*, but that which supported him, was that promise, that *my grace of God should be sufficient for him*, 2 Corinth. 12. 7, 9. The distress that *Judah* was in, in this Chapter, was their affliction, but their dejectedness under this distress, and betaking themselves to unwarrantable confederacies for safety, this was their sin; and thus is it with all the people

ple of God when he enlarges the commission of Satan against them.

2. When he leaves us in some measure to our own corruptions, our unbelief and carnal fears. Thus Christ left *Peter* to humble him for his self confidence; and when God does but take off his restraints from our corruptions, how masterless and unruly are they? It must needs be an uncomfortable season to the Soul, when God thus hides his face from it. When he deals with it as with the old world, *Gen. 6. 3. My spirit shall not strive with you.* If God strive not with us by his spirit, all our strivings are but weak and feeble, if he keep not under our corruptions, it is not in us to keep them under, when God gave up those *Romans* to their vile affections, how prodigiously did they degenerate, *Rom. 1. 26.* with the *verse* following. Now God is said to give up to vile affections, when he does not preserve us from them. He is said to harden, when he does not soften, to lead into temptation, when he does not keep us from temptation, and so to give us up to corruptions, when he does not vouchsafe us strength and assistance against them, but speaks concerning us, as he did concerning them, *Revel. 22. 11. He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.* Thus, *Dan. 12. 10. Amos 4. 4. Ezek. 20. 39. Hosea 4. 17.* The best of Saints so far as God ceases to quicken them, so far have a deadness upon their Spirits. *David* was sensible of this, when he oft repeated this requeſt, *Psal. 119. That God would quicken him.* If he keep not up our faith, it soon flags. If he cease to

draw us we can no longer run after him, if he check not our distempers they soon break in upon us without control. There needs nothing more to make the air dark but the absence of the Sun, or to make weeds grow, but a forbearing to pluck them up.

3. When he withholds those former manifestations of himself, which have been not onely the support but delight of their souls in times of trouble, and when God in this sence hides his face, the soul must needs be troubled. And the more the soul knows of God, the larger Communion it hath had with him, the more afflicting are these withdrawings, the spouse that knew how sweet the Communion of her beloved was, how impatient is she of his absence? and indeed none are so ill able to bear these withdrawings of God in this kinde, as those who have had acquaintance with him. *David*, *Heman*, and many others, When their hopes have been darkened, those refreshing tastes and enlivening visions suspended or overclouded, what volums of complaints have they uttered. *Psal.* 13. 1, 2. *Psal.* 77. 7 8 9. *Psal.* 119. 81, 82. When God who was wont to give them frequent meetings and comforting visits, did but seem to stand aloof off from them. And yet how oft is it the case of *children of light to sit in this darkness*, *Isaiah* 50. 10.

4. When he seems to disregard our prayers, and as little to mind our petitions, as he did *Sauls*, 1 *Sam.* 28. 6. Though God had several ways, wherein to answer prayer, yet *he answered him by none, neither by dreams nor by Urim*

Urim nor by Prophets. In what a desolate and helpless condition must that soul needs think it self, of whose prayers God seems to take no notice, prayer is that great remedy God hath appointed for our help when nothing else can help us; Even in those perplex and difficult cases which are above the reach of other remedies, prayer is a remedy very proper, *Mar.* 9. 29. this kind goeth not out but by fasting & prayer, *i.e.* more solemn prayer, but now to have our prayers disregarded, or for God to hide his face, that he will not hear, as it is expressed, *Isa.* 59. 2. this must needs be afflicting, this as it is mention'd to be the highest expression of Gods displeasure, that he will not hear, *Zech.* 7. 13, 14. *Prov.* 1. 24, 28. so is it mentioned as the saddest matter of his peoples complaint, that their prayers should not pass, *Lam.* 3. 44. had the Churches afflictions been greater, its burdens heavier, Yet if God had but stood by them, and taken notice of them, they would have thought them much easier. When the world is against us, if God be for us; this is comforting, but to be cast off by God this is discouraging.

5. When he discovers nothing but anger against us; as when God opens a window into our breasts, and thereby gives us a full view and prospect of our own wretchedness, when he reveals to us our guilt, and at the same time conceals his own love, oh, what a dreadful condition is the soul then in, where ever it goes the curse of the Law and the cry of its own sins pursue it, *My sin is ever before me, says* David, *Psal.* 51. 3. and how does *Job* bemoan himself, *Chap.* 13. 23,

24, 25. *How many are mine iniquities and sins, &c. Wherefore hidest thou thy face from me and holdest me for thine enemy*, &c. and vers. 26. *thou writest bitter things against me and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.* So Job 6. 2,3,4. *Oh, that my grief were throughly weighed*, &c. The *arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit, the terrours of God do set themselves in array against me*; His afflictions in outward respects were neither few nor small, his estate was gone, his relations gone, his health gone, but all these were small matters in comparison of the withdrawings of God. Had God smiled upon his soul, he could better have endured his frownings upon all his outward comforts; could he but have discerned God to be his friend, he could more chearfully have born all his other tryals: but that which occasion'd all his pathetical moans was Gods hiding his face.

2. How far is it that God does hide his face at any time from his people.

1. Negatively, God will never totally, nor finally hide his face from them, 'tis his promise, *Heb.* 13. 5. *He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, and if he hath said it, it is not for us to question it. The Disciples of *Pythagoras* had their Master in so great Reverence, that an *ipse dixit*, he hath said it, was enough to them, they thought it presumption in them to question what they had received from him: now though this was too much arrogance in men, either to give or take such an autoritativeness, yet when God speaks, he who is truth it self, he who can do all things but *cannot lie*, 'tis not for us to doubt or question.

2. Posi-

2. Positively, Though God may hide his face from his people, yet will he not turn it from them, he never ceases to love them, though he does not always manifest it; he retains towards them the love of a father even when he discovers the anger of a Judge, *Isa.* 54. 7, 8, 10. *for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer. The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my peace be removed.* So *Isa.* 57. 16, 17, 18. Many times 'tis in respect of outward comforts only God hides his face, to let them know the excellency of spiritual comforts; sometimes not only in respect of spiritual comforts, but graces also, that his people may know their dependance upon him; but still God regards their safety.

3. The reasons why God deals thus with his people; 'tis not from any delight he takes in their sorrows, nor from any pleasure he hath in their troubles. But,

1. 'Tis to chastise them for their sins, every sin is a forsaking God, and consequently a provoking God to forsake us, did not we by our disobediences withdraw our selves from him, God would not withdraw himself from us; That the Sun is overclouded, 'tis from those vapours which the earth it self sends up; but there are some sins especially branded in Scripture as the causes of this calamity.

1. Spiritual Idolatry, when our hearts wander

from him after strange loves, the great thing God requires is our hearts, if we deny them to him no wonder if he hide his face from us. When we set up creatures in Gods throne, and give that to them which is only due to him, this is high disloyalty and provokes his jealousie, *Deut.* 31. 17, 18. *Deut.* 32. 17, 20, 21. God will admit no rivals, have no partners in our hearts, he that loveth not all in comparison of him, is not accounted aright to love him, for this sin God sometimes gives the soul a kind of divorce.

2. Obstinacy and stubbornes against all Counsels and instructions, *because I have purged thee, and thou wouldst not be purged*, &c. Ezek. 24. 13. *because the people of Israel would none of Gods Counsels he leaves them to their own*, Psal. 81. 11, 12.

3. Lukewarmnes in Gods service, this was the sin for which God threatned the Church of *Ephesus*, *Revel.* 2. 4, 5. the Church of *Laodicea*, *Revel.* 3. 15, 16. 'tis not enough that we serve God, but we must serve him with all our might and with all our strength.

4. A willing connivance at any known sin, either in our selves, or in others so far as concerns us, thus in the Church of *Pergamus*, *Revel.* 2. 14. in the Church of *Thyatira*, *Revel.* 2. 20.

5. A disesteem of his love and the pledges thereof; when *Israel* once loathed their Manna they did not long enjoy it; when they slighted Sabbaths and spiritual opportunities God sends a famine of this spiritual food, *Amos* 8. 5. compared with *verses* 11, 12.

6. Unfruitfulnes under the means of grace, for this sin God threatned his Ancient people to remove

remove his Gospel from them, they brought not forth the fruits of it, *Matth.* 21. 43.

2. To carry on the designs and purposes of his own grace towards them. God hides his face for a time that he may not hide it for ever; he does not now spare them, that he may for ever spare them. But more particularly,

1. God hides his face sometimes, that he may recover his people to a due esteem of his favour. The spouse flagged in her affections towards Christ, his withdrawings raise up her desires.

2. That they may be more wary and cautious in shuning whatever might renew these breaches again, and consequently enjoy his favour more fully and more constantly. The burnt child dreads the fire.

4. The uncomfortableness of this condition.

1. Proportionably, to the withdrawings of God, there will be a damp upon all our comforts; If the sun be set all the stars in the firmament cannot make day, if God hide his face, it must needs be night with the poor soul; Thus with *David*, *Psal.* 30. 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

2. Accordingly, there will be a decay in all our graces; those plants which while the sun is near, thrive and flourish, in the winter season seem to die and wither; the soul of man is but a barren soil in respect of all spiritual good, while God who is the spiritual husbandman, is tilling and dressing, and taking pains with it, 'tis then fruitful, but when God withdraws all decays, *John* 15. 2. *Jerem.* 23. 3.

3. There will be proportionably a deadness

and inefficacy upon all the means of doing us good. The weapons of our spiritual warfare are only powerful through God. The Gospel is the *power of God, Rom.* 7. 16. 'tis not food alone can nourish but the blessing of God going with it; 'tis not ordinances alone can refresh, but God in and by ordinances.

4. Every affliction will proportionably become more burdenson and afflicting; as the heaviest of afflictions have seemed light to those who have had the presence of God to sweeten them, and his assistance to bear them; so the lightest of afflictions must needs be heavy to them from whom God is withdrawn. Every small burden seems great to weak and feeble persons, when greater matters seem a very nothing to hale and strong persons. Now as Gods presence is with us, so is our strength.

Use. If God hide his face from them who are the Objects of his favour, what will become of them who are the objects of his displeasure? If these things be done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry? If this be the severity of God towards them whom he loves, how dreadful is the severity of God against them whom he hates? If this may be the portion of them who are in a state of grace, what shall be the portion of them who are in a state of sin? If so much be endured by vessels of mercy, what must be endured by vessels of wrath? They may at present flourish, but what will their condition be in that *day of revelation of the righteous judgement of God, Rom.* 2. 5.

Use. When it goes worst with the people of God,

God, 'tis much better with them then with others, they are Objects of Gods favour, though unable at present to discern any thing but anger, their condition is safe though at present uncomfortable. How vast a difference is there betwixt their sorrows and others joys; The only ground of their sorrows, is because they are unable to discern what cause they have of joy, and the onely ground of others joys, is because they see not what cause they have of sorrow.

Use. It becomes us to consider in how great a measure, this is the case of our Church and Nation. Hath not God hid his face from our *Jacob* by removing the wonted tokens and pledges of his gracious presence? How great an Eclipse is this day upon all our glory? How are we scanted of former opportunities? It concerns us the more to be affected with these things, because none of us, but by our barrenness under former means, and by our contempt of Gospel priviledges, have contributed very much to the drawing down of this severity. If the Prophet here accounts it so sore a judgement for God to hide his face in respect of temporal favours, how much greater cause have we to lay to heart, Gods hiding his face in respect of spiritual mercies and priviledges.

2. Doct. *That when God hides his face, from his people, the great work and business which then lies before them, is to wait upon the Lord to look for him*; 'tis their work at all times to *wait* upon God, and that not only as servants to receive his commands, but as necessitous persons to obtain his relief, both which are put together,

Pſal. 123. 2. *As the eyes of ſervants look unto the hand of their Maſters*, &c. *ſo our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.* There is not that perſon on earth, whoſe ignorance of his duty does not lay a continual obligation upon him, to wait upon the Lord for direction and Councel. Nor is there that perſon on earth, whoſe neceſſities and wants, do not lay the like obligation upon him, of waiting upon the Lord for relief and aſſiſtance. Hence is it that the people of God are frequently deſcribed by this Character, they are ſuch *as wait upon the Lord*, believers in the Old Teſtament waited the accompliſhment of thoſe promiſes, the fulfilling whereof God had reſerved for the times of the Goſpel. Thus *Jacob* waited for the ſalvation of the Lord, *Gen.* 49. 18. *John* the Baptiſt *waited for the Meſſiah*, *Matth.* 11. 3. *Joſeph* of *Arimathea waited for the kingdom of God*, *Mark* 15. 43. Simeon *waited for the conſolation of* Iſrael, *Luke* 2. 25. *The Jews look for redemption in* Jeruſalem, *Luke* 2. 38. Believers under the New Teſtament are ſaid to wait for the accompliſhment of thoſe promiſes, the fulfilling whereof God hath reſerved for another world, they are ſaid *to look for the Saviour*, *Phil.* 3. 20. *To look for that bleſſed hope*, *Tit.* 2. 13. *To look for Chriſt*, *Heb.* 9. 28. But though it be both the duty and Character of Gods people at all times to wait upon the Lord, yet is it eſpecially their work and buſineſs at ſuch times: the Prophet knew not what better courſe to take in that dark, and gloomy ſeaſon, and therefore he reſolves for himſelf to wait upon the Lord, and by his own example he provokes

others

others to do the like; when *Jehoshaphat*, and the people were so distressed, *that they knew not what to do, their eyes were upon God*, — 2 Chron. 20. 12. *The Lord is good unto them that wait for him.* — *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord*, Lam. 3. 25, 26. *Psal.* 33. 18, 20. This is the course which God hath prescribed, the faithful practised, and God himself hath all along owned.

For the further clearing of this *Doct.* Two things shall be spoke to.

1. The nature of this carriage or duty.

2. The principles from which this carriage arises.

1. Concerning the nature of this carriage, or what it is to wait upon the Lord, and in what acts it doth formally express it self. It is in general such a carriage as results from the joynt exercise of many particular graces, as faith, hope, patience, humility, repentance, *&c.* all these and many other graces are necessary ingredients to this carriage, and without the concurrent acting of all these we cannot wait upon God aright; but more particularly, waiting upon God implies,

1. An exercising faith upon the promises, even when providence seems most to contradict the promise; distrust drives us from God, as that prophane Prince, 1 *Kings* 6. 33. *This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* his unbelief represents this duty vain and unprofitable, but now faith seeks a certainty and sufficiency of relief in the promises, and there-

fore

fore builds upon them, and consequently bears up the soul above all sinking discouragements; the promises are wells of consolation, but faith is the bucket; they are treasuries of all kinds of mercy, but faith fetches out supplies; though there be never so much comfort laid up in the promises, yet what is all this to us unless we do by faith make use of them; *I had fainted*, says David, *unless I had believed*, &c. *Psal.* 27. 13, 14. There were many discouragements in the providences of God, but *David* answers all by believing the promises; and indeed there is no other way to answer our Objections but by believing, thousands of troubled thoughts may afflict and burden us, but faith answers all.

2. A patient and persevering expectation of Gods return, how long soever he delay; Though God do not answer us in our time, yet patience waits Gods time; though he do not return so soon as we desire, yet will he stay no longer then he sees it for our good; and therefore this is the language of patience, *Habbac.* 2. 3. *the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* Psal. 37. 7. *rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him, fret not thy self*, &c. *he that believes makes no haste.* 'Tis the proper work of patience to wait Gods leasure, and not to think him slack concerning his promises. *Heb.* 10. 37. God hath told us he will come as a deliverer, and patience expects his coming, till at last it can say with that Martyr Master *Glover*, *He is come*, *He is come*. *Saul* waited, as he thought, a long time for *Samuel*,

Samuel; but at last his patience is wearied out, 1 *Sam.* 13. 8, 9, 13, 14. But to wait is to abide Gods time, *Hos.* 3. 3. with *Ezek.* 38. 8. The Jews sate as a desolate widow some hundreds of years before Christ, and above sixteen hundred years since praying, that God would again build their temple; God's time is not yet come for them, now to wait is to hold out; hope is by some compared to a line, patience is nothing else but hope and faith drawn forth.

3. A following God with fervent and uncessant prayers, though he seem at present not to regard them; though he deal with us as he did with the Church, *Lament.* 3. 44. whose prayers could not pass, yet to wait is to charge our selves still to wait as *David*, *Psal.* 62. 1. *My soul waiteth upon the Lord*, and vers. 5. of that *Psalm*, *My soul wait thou upon God*; Though God do not as yet answer, yet to wait is never to cease praying, till we find God answering; to continue seeking as the spouse did, till she found him whom her soul loved. *For this cause I besought the Lord thrice*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. says, S. *Paul*, but to wait is to continue in prayer, as *David*, *Psal.* 69. 3, 4, 5, 6. To be resolv'd to take no denials like that poor woman of *Canaan*, whose importunity nothing but the answer of her request could appease, *Matth.* 15. 22, 23, 24. and so on to vers. 29. *Or as blind Bartimeus*, *Mark* 10. 46. to vers. 50.

4. A keeping close to God in ways of duty, even when he seems to be furthest off from us in ways of mercy, a willingness rather to have our calamities continued, then our deliverance obtained

tained by means unwarrantable. Thus David though he had the promise of the Kingdom, and might at several times have gotten possession thereof by the destruction of *Saul*; Yet he waits Gods time, and though it was for a Kingdom, he will not step out of Gods way; and indeed we cannot be said to wait upon God, while we keep not in his way, *Psal.* 37. 34. *Wait on the Lord and keep his way*, &c. *Psal.* 25. 4, 5, 21. to purchase deliverance from outward calamities, by sinful means, is to destroy the soul to preserve the body, or to make *Gehezi* his bargain, who together with his change of raiment had a curse with it, 'Tis *Solomons* advice, *Prov.* 20. 22. *Say not thou I will recompence evil, but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee*, Isa. 26. 8. *In the way of thy judgements have we waited for thee*, &c.

5. A diligent use of all means for the recovery of what we have lost; the woman that had that bloody issue spent all she had upon the Physicians; so should we do our utmost in the use of means.

First, By a through search and scrutiny after those sins which have provoked God to hide his face from us, *Lament.* 3. 40. *Let us search and try our ways*, &c. Be sure if there be any breach 'twixt God and us, it is of our own making; Hath God deprived us of former opportunities? Have not we been barren and unfruitful? Hath he taken much of former means and helps from us? Have not we undervalued those mercies? We may many times read our sin in our punishment, 'tis the promise of God, *To him that hath, shall be given, i. e.* to him that improveth the mercies

and

and talents he hath; others are said not to have what they have, *Matth.* 25. 29. Hath God exercised us with outward judgements? Have not we been wanton with those mercies which God hath removed?

2. A zealous earnestness in lamenting and reforming those sins, our turning unto God is the best means we can use to obtain his returning unto us; we are never more fit for mercy, then when we have reformed and cast off those sins, which have deprived us of mercies, this is to lay the axe to the root of the tree.

3. A preparing our selves for mercy; It may be we are not low enough, 1 *Pet.* 5. 6. It may be we are not sufficiently divorced from our former vanities, labour to remove all impediments, for be sure, nothing but our own iniquities can keep back good things from us.

2. Concerning the principles from whence this carriage arises. Take these few.

1. An humble sense of our own vileness, that if we enjoy never so little of these outward good things, we are less then the least of all; if God be never so severe with us, there is much of mercy in the highest acts of severity, though we suffer much, all is little in comparison of what we deserve to suffer; while we have such vile thoughts of our selves, we cannot but think well of God, and be ready to wait upon him; but so long as we think God harsh and rigorous, we are apt to say, as he did, 1 *Kings* 6. 33. *Why should we wait any longer for him?*

2. A through conviction of our being wholly at the will and pleasure of God, if we enjoy any tokens

tokens of his love it is from his bounty; if they be removed, God herein is righteous; The very thoughts that all afflictions have been from God, have silenced all murmurings and repinings in believers of old; This was the Language of Eli, *1 Sam.* 3.18. *It is the Lord.* So *Hezekiah*, *It is the word of the Lord*, Isa. 39.8. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because thou didst it*, saye, *David*, *Psal* 39.9. There may be miscarriages in instruments but none in God.

3. A setled perswasion of our dependance upon God for whatever help we need; whatever our distresses are, 'tis God alone can give ease; if he bind, who can loose? If he cast down, who can raise up? If he speak trouble, who can speak peace? He is the supreme and Sovereign disposer of all things, *Deut.* 32.39. None can deliver out of his hands. These perswasions engage us to wait upon God alone, *Jer.* 14.22.

4. A Reverent esteem of the wisdom, goodness and faithfulness of God in all his dispensations, that all his works are in weight and measure, and that he who hath the disposal of all things does dispose of all things, to the best, though we cannot many times see these truths, because the ways of God are so great a deep; Yet to believe it, is necessary to our waiting upon God, to entertain good thoughts of him, what ever thoughts he seems to entertain concerning us.

5. A resignation of our selves into the hands of God, a submitting our wills unto his, a laying our selves down at his feet, that if God see it best both in reference to his glory, and our own good, that we should rather honour him in away

of

of suffering than doing, to pray with our Saviour, *If it be possible let this Cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done*, Mat. 26. 39.

Use. What height of folly then is it, when God seems to cast off all regard of us, for us to cast off all regard of *him*: as do all impatient and froward persons, who upon every withdrawing of God, are so bold as to call the glorious Majesty of Heaven before their petty Tribunal; and charge him either with rigorousness or unfaithfulness: as, 2 *Kings* 6. 33. And oh how apt are all men so far to forget their subjection and dependence upon God, as when he breaks in upon them by his judgments, they break out against him in their complaints and murmurings. Others there are who in their distresses betake themselves to indirect and sinful means of safety, as the *Jews* here to their Confederacies with the bordering Heathens. How many are there who think no course bad by which they may shift off dangers, and shelter themselves from an approaching Storm.... But this is not to wait upon the Lord, but a course quite contrary to what is commended here. Now in these perilous times, lest we should make use of deceitful refuges, consider these few arguments.

1. The absolute impossibility of ever finding benefit by any way of Sin. Sin is a departing from God, and in departing from him, we forsake our strength and refuge. Can we ever be safe while we are from under Gods Protection? Sin is a putting our selves out of Gods Protecti-

on. *The Lord is with you while you are with him, but if you forsake him he will forsake you,* 2 Chron. 15. 2. Can any kind of means do us good without Gods concurrence? whatever there is of virtue in them, it is derived from him: does Food nourish? 'tis God that makes it nourishing, *Mat.* 4. 4. Does Physick cure? 'tis God that makes it effectual. Do Creature helps, Friends, *&c.* stand us in stead? 'tis God that gives them both hearts and power. To use indirect means, is to blast means, and render them ineffectual. It's true that God sometimes permits many to flourish not only in their sinful courses, but by their sinful courses. This was *Asaphs* temptation, *Psal.* 73. But alas, much better would it have been for such, rather to have been without their comforts than to have purchased them thus.

2. This kind of carriage, in stead of relieving us in our distresses, does but increase them. Those towards whom God hath any purpose of mercy, if gentler means prevail not, God, like a careful Physitian, applys sharper: if milder corrections do not humble them, like a tender Parent, he is more severe: if cords of love will not draw them, he uses the bonds of affliction; but if mercies move not, and afflictions prevail not, God takes another course with them and never leaves till he brings them upon their knees. In natural causes resistance does but increase the vigour and operation of contraries. When fire and water meet in strong opposition, how does the stronger rage, till it hath got the victory. God tryed many ways with *Ephraim,*

Ephraim, but his heart yielded not, God never gives over till he hath humbled him, *Isa.* 57. 16, 17. with *Jer.* 31. 19. As for others, God sometimes deals with them as he did with *Pharaoh*, who by his *stubbornness* encreased his Plagues; or else as he dealt at last with *Ephraim* Hos. 4. 17. *He gave him up to his incorrigibleness*, either they hasten their ruine in this world by their perverseness, or else they ripen themselves for judgment in another world.

3. Instead of removeing or shortning our tryals, this carriage does prolong and continue them. The Chyrurgeon continues his Plaisters while the Sore is unhealed: the Child does but prolong his Fathers displeasure by his obstinacy. A Prince that hath once begun to reduce rebellious Subjects, leaves not off till he hath subdued them: there's no standing it out against God, no other way to prevail with him, but by repentance and submission.

Use Exhort. To follow the Prophets Example here, in taking the same course in this day of *Jacobs* trouble, as he did in that: God had hid his face from *Jacob* then, he hath hid his face from *Jacob* now let us be perswaded to wait upon the Lord to look for him.

1. The recovery of those pledges of Gods love, whereof we are at present deprived, is a mercy worthy the waiting for. Hath God hid his face from this Nation in general, by depriving us in a great measure of the means of Communion with himself: remember how supporting, how refreshing, how improving and strengthning you have found those Ordinances,

of which you are at present in a great measure scanted, and you cannot but be sensible that there are Priviledges worthy the waiting for. God hath exercised us in this Nation with many years of affliction, but what affliction ever like to this? hath God hid his face from any soul in particular? be persuaded to wait, the mercy worthy the waiting for, to regain his favour.

1. There are no comforts in all the world like the comforts of Gods presence: he that hath once tasted the sweetness of these comforts, cannot but comparatively despise all other, as in the primitive Christians they despised estates, liberties, Friends, yea and life it self, rather than submit to any thing that might endanger Gods withdrawing from them.

2. Tis not the bare presence and favour of God, but the evidence and sence thereof, that renders our condition comfortable. In the favour of God is life, his loving kindness is better than life; but while the soul hath its evidences blotted, its hopes darkned, the higer it possess the favour of God, the more afflicting is the inevidence thereof. Is God the fountain of all good? and is this God mine enemy? are all my fresh springs in him, and are all these stopt and shut up against me? Is he the supreme disposer of all things, and am I under his displeasure? that soul that considers what God is in himself, what he is to others of his servants, and what he hath been to it self in times past, cannot but be sensible how grievous a thing it is to lose such a Friend, such a Father, &c. and

therefore esteem the recovery of his favour a mercy worthy the waiting for.

3. The unsafeness of this condition. Three things there are by which Experimental Christians find themselves very much shaken in this world. 1. The Temptations of Satan, sometimes making use of the allurements, sometimes of the discouragements of this world: but the sence of Gods love raises the soul into an holy indifferency about these things as small matters. While the bird is upon the wing, all the gins and snares laid on the ground cannot intangle it: so it is with Souls while conversing with God. 2. Inward accusations, when Satan and Conscience joyn together in representing to the Soul its Sins and Dangers: what amazement and horror do then take hold upon it if God hide his face. 3. Outward streights and afflictions: but oh what an undaunted courage did the sense of Gods love raise in the Martyrs of old; how did it cause them to contemn these things, *Rom.* 5. 3. *Rom.* 8. 18. They gloryed in Tribulations, and accounted all the sufferings of this life not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed: it is therefore in all these respects a Mercy worthy the waiting for.

2. The certainty of success in this course: all other courses are but the struggling of the Wild Beast in the net, by which it is more entangled; but it is good for a man to wait, *Lam.* 3. 26. This hope makes not ashamed. Rom. 5. 5. *'Tis the promise of God that they that wait upon him shall not be ashamed*, Isa. 49. 23. Psal. 37. 9. and

what greater assurance can we have than the Word of God; we build much sometimes upon the word of men, but the Word of God is sure: besides, how exact and punctual hath God been in making good what he hath promised. When the time was expired of their detainment in *Ægypt*, no sooner was the four hundred and thirty years past but the self same day he accomplishes their promised deliverance, *Exod.* 12. 40, 41, 42. And as punctual was God in delivering his people out of *Babylon*, Dan. 9. 30. This was therefore *Davids* plea, Psal. 102. 13. *Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, because the time to favour her, yea the set time is come.*

Quest. But how may we discern when our set time for Deliverance is come?

Answ. Though we have not such clear and particular Revelations as his people of old had, yet have we such general discoveries by which we may guess. 1. The lowness of his peoples condition; this was the argument prevailed with God, *Exod.* 2. 23, 24. their *sighs and cry* under that sore bondage: thus 2 *King.* 14. 26, 27. *the bitterness of their affliction.* 2. The lowness of their disposition, so 1 *Pet.* 5. 6. 3. The rage and insolency of their Adversaries, *Deut.* 32. 27. *Ezek.* 20. 22. these have usually been prognosticks of deliverance.

3. This is the highest expression of our sincerity and faithfulness, when God seemeth to be leaving us, for us to be unwilling to leave him, to wait upon God, and quiet our hearts by faith in his promises notwithstanding all dis-

con-

couragements, to believe in him when we cannot see him: this is the faith our Saviour commends; *Thou believeſt becauſe thou haſt ſeen, bleſſed are they that believe and have not ſeen*, Joh. 20. 29. This was the excellency of *Jobs* faith, that it was ſo ſtedfaſt in cleaving to God, that nothing could unſettle it; *though he kill me yet will I truſt in him*, Job 13. 15.

4. 'Tis for this end God many times hides his face, to exerciſe the faith and patience of his people in waiting, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. God hath by his Spirit enriched the ſouls of his people with thoſe graces, as might qualify them for this carriage, and therefore he leads them by his providence into ſuch conditions as may exerciſe and call forth thoſe graces.

5. This kind of carriage does not only very much conduce to our ſupport in theſe dark intervals, but to the ſweetning Gods return, when believers can ſay as God promiſes they ſhall ſay, *Iſa.* 25. 9. *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will ſave us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his Salvation.*

6. There lies a greater obligation upon Believers to this carriage, than upon any others: their profeſſions, their priviledges, the promiſes God hath made to them; their graces are all as ſo many obligations to wait.

7. How long hath God waited upon us, before converſion, how many repulſes and denyals have we given to all invitations; and after converſion how oft and how long hath God waited our returns from back-ſlidings? and yet

though God hath no other obligation upon him to wait for our good but only from his own goodness: there lies an obligation upon us by way of debt: besides God cannot be benefited by his returns to us, only we are thereby made happy. In a word, if we *wait* upon God, God will still *wait* upon us, *Isa.* 30. 18. and give us cause to say, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him: this is the Lord, we will be glad and rejoyce in his Salvation.*

Titus 2. part of Verse 10.

That they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.



T. *Paul*, that Vessel of God, chosen to bear his Name before the Gentiles, *Acts* 9. 15. was so taken up with the common Affairs of the Church in general, journeying from place to place, and having the care of many Churches upon him (for the Office of an Apostle was so large and unlimited, that indeed it was fit for none but those who are immediately inspired by God with gifts and abilities beyond what others can rationally look for) professeth, of all the troubles he met with from without, none were so considerable, none did so much break his thoughts, and went so near his Soul, as the care of the Churches; it is a notable passage of his, to shew how hearty he was in minding the concerns of poor Souls: 2 *Cor.* 11. 28. where after he had enumerated his several troubles, he mentions all these to be as nothing; for says he, *That which comes upon me daily is more than all, and that is the care of the Churches*: This is a temper that becomes so publick an Officer; but in regard

regard his Soul was so large, and his Commission so extensive, he was not long resident in any particular place, and therefore he was necessited to depute others to water that seed he had planted, and to carry on that good work that he had begun, and upon this account it was that he writes both his Epistles to *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 1. 3. and upon this account he here writes to *Titus* Chapter 1. ver. 5. *Titus* was by birth a Grecian of the stock of the Gentiles, and after his Conversion was a constant Companion and Fellow-labourer with this great Apostle, and was much imployed by him in the Ministry of the Gospel.

The great Work that he aimed at in writing this Epistle to *Titus* you find in one general word expresst, it was, *to set in order those things that were wanting*, Chap. 1. ver. 5. and to direct him in the management of that most important affair of the Church.

In this Chapter you have several duties which St. *Paul* gives *Titus* in charge, that he should be a faithful remembrancer to those *Cretians*, which duties are many and divers.

1. He speaks of those duties that concern some particular Christians.

2. Of those that concern all Christians in Common.

Those that concern particular Christians are, Men and Women, Young and Old, Masters and Servants: as you have it in the beginning of this Chapter, *ver.* 1. *But speak thou the things which become sound Doctrine.*

And then he speaks to young Persons, *ver.* 6.

Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

And he counsels *Titus* to shew them his own example, *ver.* 7. *In all things shew thy self a Pattern of good works.*

And so he descends to the meaneſt degree of Christians, and that is to Servants; Servants were then of a more vile and abject condition than houſhould Servants are now among us: Servants were then ſlaves, their perſons and lives were at the wills of their Maſters: and becauſe their condition was ſuch, they had little comfort from things here below, and therefore takes care of them; and this ſhews the greatneſs of the Apoſtles care in inſtructing them how they may live comfortably; and to encourage them, he tells them, *they ſhould be obedient to their own Maſters, and to pleaſe them well in all things, not anſwering again, not purloyning, but ſhewing all good fidelity*: The reaſon he gives is this, *That they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* Some reckon this laſt clauſe under the duties which concern all Chriſtians incommon; but it is alledged here with particular reference to Servants, and for that there are two Reaſons given: Becauſe the duties here preſt upon Servants were duties to which they were very much averſe by the harſhneſs or auſterenes of their Maſters, who had ſuch power over them beyond or above what is uſed by us, and what Chriſtians all along ſince have had. Now they were under danger of thoſe ſins *that* he diſſuaded them from, as *purloyning from them*, &c. And to encourage them, he tells them, though your condition be never ſo mean, though you are ſo contemptible in the ſight of men, yet by

your

your good carriage you may be accepted in the sight of God, you are not in so low a capacity but you are capable of *adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour*. Now though this Exhortation be of greater latitude than to Servants, yet it is spoken to them upon this account, because they had little hopes of finding acceptance with God, since they were under such austerity to their own Masters. Now if they, how much more should others *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour*.

In the words are these two particulars:

1. *A description of the Gospel*, it is the Doctrine of God, that speaks it to be of Divine Authority; and it is said to be the Doctrine of God our Saviour, and that speaks its gracious designation in order to the saving of lost Creatures; and you find it more fully expressed in the next Verse, *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared, &c.* The Grace of God in affording his Gospel, it brings Salvation that is in the tenders and proffers, and discovering the way how we may attain it. This is a high commendation given of the Gospel, it is *the Doctrine of God, and of God our Saviour*.

2. Here is a declaration of their duty to whom this Doctrine comes, to whom God hath been so gracious as to vouchsafe his Gospel, they must adorn it, that is, render it lovely and beautiful and amiable to others; they must carry themselves so as to give no occasion to others of stumbling, or taking offence by their miscarriage; they must so live as not to give occasion to others to think the Gospel hath no more effi-

ca-

than humane Rules and Reason hath. This duty is mentioned in a two-fold extent, that they and all they (not only Servants but others to whom this Doctrine comes) should adorn the Gospel, and that they may adorn the Gospel in all things, in every branch and part of this Doctrine.

There are several Doctrines I shall commend to you from the words:

1. Doct. *That Jesus Christ is not merely man, but really God.*

The Gospel here is said to be the Doctrine of God; and this we finde is the ordinary Language wherein the Scripture speaks of Christ (at least it is the familiar Language) *Titus* 1. 3. *According to the Commandment of God our Saviour*; he is called there God our Saviour: and in the 13th verse of this Chapter, *Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* The *Socinians* and *Arians* have been very busie in gathering together several Scriptures wherein the word *Eloah* and *Elohim* (wherein the singular number is put for the plural) are ascribed to Creatures; there are two places especially insisted on, *Exod.* 7. 1. God tells *Moses, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh.* The other is *Psal.* 82. 6. *I have said, Ye are Gods*, speaking of Magistrates and Princes, and the great Ones of the world, those that are in the highest Rank of men; their design hereby is to weaken the faith of Christians concerning the Divinity of Christ. In answer to these two Scriptures it is observed by many Learned Writers, though the Name of God be indeed

deed ascribed to Magistrates and great Ones in the world more than once or twice, yet is the Title never given to them but with some restriction and diminution; and therefore in both those Scriptures before quoted, it is not said simply, *I will make thee a God to Pharaoh*; but he speaks of the reverence and esteem that he should finde from *Pharaoh*; and thus it is expounded in *Exod.* 4. 16. God tells *Moses*, *Aaron should be to him instead of a mouth, and he should be instead of God.* *Aaron* is not simply, but *instead*, to denote his Authority in giving his Command and Orders. So for *Psal.* 82. 6. *I said ye are Gods*; but in *ver.* 7. you have this diminution, *You shall die like men.* But on the other hand, the Name of God is usually given to Christ with some augmentative Epithite; and truly that Christ is truly God, it is one great foundation of all our faith and hope, and I shall clear it briefly by these Arguments:

1. He whom the Scriptures doth not only honour with the Name of God, but with those additional Epithites which no Creature is capable of but God, must needs be God, and not meer man; Thus in respect of Jesus Christ, God hath honoured him not only with this Name, but with many additional Titles: He is said, *to be God equal with the Father*: Phil. 2. 6. *He thought it no robbery to be equal with God.*

Titus 2. 13. He is stiled, *The Great God*; *and the true God.* 1 Epist. St. *John* 5. 20. *And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: This is the true God, and eternal life.* The true God is to be taken in opposition to all Idol-

Gods,

Gods, and all those Metaphorical expressions, where we finde this Name *Elohim* (as sometimes) given to Creatures.

Again, he is stiled, *The Mighty God*, Isa. 9. 6. *For unto us a Child is born, his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellour, the Mighty God.*

He is called, *God blessed for ever*, Rom. 9. 5. *Whose are the Fathers* (speaking of the Priviledges of the Jews) *and of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, who is God blessed for ever.*

He is stiled also, *The Lord of Glory*, 1 Cor. 2. 8. *Which none of the Princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*

Nay, the Name *Jehovah* which throughout all the Scripture is not so much as singly ascribed to any Creature, is ascribed to Jesus Christ; He is called, *The Lord our Righteousness*, *Jehovah our Righteousness*: That is the first.

2. He in whom are all those high and eminent perfections, those glorious Attributes which transcend the capacity of any Creature, must needs be God; and these the Scripture ascribes to Christ. I shall only give you some few hints.

He who is Omnipotent, whose Power is boundless and unlimited, whose Government reacheth Heaven and Earth, He that can do all things must needs be God.

Take all the Power that is in the Creature, there is confinement and limitation of their Power; but Jesus Christ is Almighty, *Rev.* 1. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Almighty.* Rev. 19. 6. *The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.* 'Tis true, Angels do excel in Power, but Omnipotencie is

peculiar

peculiar to the true God; for they are but Creatures, and their power is limited by him they are his Messengers whom he imploys.

Again, Omniscience, this is ascribed to Jesus Christ, *He searcheth hearts, and tryeth reins*; he hath a window open into all mens breasts, and discovers what is their thoughts, he needs not that any should tell him any thing, because he knows it, and therefore he must needs be God. *John* 2. 25. *And he needed not that any should testifie of man; for he knew what was in man*, that is, as he is God. *John* 13. 19. He that knoweth all things before they come to pass must needs be God. *Now I tell you* (says he) *before it come, that when it is come to pass, you might believe that I am he*; believe him to be God. So *Rev.* 2. 23. *I am he that searcheth the Reins and Heart, and will give to every one of you according to your works*. Now this is only peculiar to the great God.

3. He is said to be Omnipresent, He was in Heaven, even while he was upon the Earth. *John* 14. 3. *I go, that where I am ye may be also*. He was on Earth, but as God He was even then in Heaven. *Matth.* 28. 20. His promise to his Disciples is, *And lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world*; and so he is as God, He is with them while he is in Heaven. As Ubiquity is only peculiar to the great God, he fills Heaven and earth with his presence; for the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him: Now I will be with you when I am taken up from you, when you cannot see me, nor converse in the flesh with me any longer.

4. Immutability and Eternity are ascribed to Jesus

Jesus Christ, *Prov.* 8. 22. it is applied to him who is the Wisdom spoken of there principally, *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old*: ver. 23, 24, 25, 26. *I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the Earth was*, &c.

This shews that Jesus Christ was Antecedaneous to all Creatures, and that speaks him to be Eternal: *Psal.* 90. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

So everlasting is peculiar to God which is ascribed to Christ, *Micha* 5. 2. *Whose goings forth have been from of Old, from everlasting.*

Your Margent reads it, *From the days of Eternity*, Heb. 13. 8. *Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to day, and for ever.* It is said of him, *There is no variableness nor shadow of changing*; and he is called, *The everlasting Father*, *Isa.* 9. 6.

Lastly, He that hath life in Himself, and is the Principle of life to others must needs be God. It is a Contradiction to be a Creature and to be self-Originated. So is it said of Jesus Christ, *Acts* 3. 15. *And killed the Prince of Life.* v. 16. *And his Name, through Faith in his Name, hath made this man strong*; that shews the greatness of his power, *through faith in his Name.* *John* 5. 26. *For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself.*

3. He to whom works of Infiniteness are ascribed must needs be God. No Creature can possibly do any act of Infiniteness, because it is above the rank of a Creature.

The work of Creation, which is a work of infiniteness, is ascribed to Jesus Christ, *John* 1. 3. *All things were made by him.*

So the work of Supportation is ascribed to him, *Heb.* 1. 3. *Upholding all things by the word of his power.* He that not onely brought all things out of nothing by the Word of his power, but he that upholds them from falling back into their first nothing again, by the same Almighty power, must needs be God; and this is ascribed to Christ. So the work of Redemption, this is attributed to *Jesus Christ*: He that could subdue him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; He that could conquer Principallities and Powers, and lead Captivity captive; He to whom all things are made subject both in Heaven and in Earth, Principallities, Dominions and Thrones, and every thing that is named, that is, every thing that is excellent, are made subject to him, *Eph.* 1. 22. *And hath put all things under his feet*, and hath left nothing unsubdued, *and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church*; That is the third Argument.

4. He whom Angels adore and Creatures worship must needs be God; and thus they do Jesus Christ: God is very jealous of his own Honour and will not suffer them to be given to any other: But honour and worship is by the Command of God to be given to Jesus Christ, *Heb.* 1. 6. *Let all the Angels of God worship him.* And we are baptized in the Name of Christ, *Mat.* 28. 19. And we are bound to pray in the Name of Christ; *Whatever you ask in my Name, that will I do*, John 14. 13. And to believe in Christ,

Christ, *John* 14. 2. *Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God believe also in me.* Now to believe in any thing is to make a God of it; we are taken off from setting our faith on any Creature: *Trust not in man, nor in the Son of man*: and, *cursed is he that maketh an arm of flesh his strength*, that puts his confidence in any Creature.

In a Word, all the Glory that belongs to the Father, the Father hath commanded us to give to his Son; That all might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, *John* 5. 23. *That all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father; he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father.* So much for this Doctrine: I shall apply it under the next.

Doct. 2. *That as Jesus Christ is truly God; so this God is the Saviour of lost Creatures.* He is a Saviour to all that do partake of Salvation; there is no other Saviour but only Jesus Christ. *The Doctrine of God our Saviour*, Tit. 2. 10 *According to the Commandment of God our Savior*, *Tit.* 1. 3. You have it several times in this Epistle. It was under this Name that the Angels (as Heralds) from Heaven did proclaim his Incarnation, *He shall save his people from their sins.* Now a Saviour implies a state of misery; it supposeth either some misery that we are under for the present, or some danger that we are liable to for the future; & in both these respects all the Children of men do stand in need of a Savior. We are Apostate Creatures, & have sinned our selves not only into a state of estrangement from God, but we have invested our selves with enmity against God. Now this Condition

must needs be a perishing Condition: for if *the favour of God be better than life*, then the anger and displeasure of God is more dreadful than death it self. This is the punishment of the damned: it is expressed by this as the most significant part of their misery, *Depart from me ye cursed*, Mat. 25. 4. (*Ye cursed*) There is hell enough in that one word, leaving out the other: as we are under great danger we have need of a Saviour; now there is no other Saviour but Jesus Christ: He is said to be *the Saviour of all men*, that is, of all that are saved. Of *all men*, not that every individual person shall be saved, or was intended to be saved by the condescention of Christ, but he is the Saviour of all men, whether Jew or Gentile; for Salvation of Old was restrained to the people of the Jews, as to the means; and we have reason to believe as to the effect, for there is no Salvation without Christ, *other Foundation can no man lay*, 1 Cor. 3 11. For the opening of this I shall speak briefly to three things.

1. From what it is that Christ saves.
2. Whom it is that he saves.
3. How it that he accomplisheth this work of Salvation.

1. From what it is Christ saves. He saves in general from every thing that is dreadful, every thing that doth endanger the safety and well being of Souls to all Eternity.

1. He saves from Satan the worst of Enemies, he hath trampled upon Principalities and Powers, and led them captive.

Object.

Object. *But are not the people of God continually moleſted and diſquieted by Satan; is not he as a roaring Lyon going up and down ſeeking whom he may devour, or at leaſt whom he may diſquiet and diſturb?*

Anſw. I anſwer, He ſaves indeed from Satan though not as a Tempter, yet as a Deſtroyer, he may diſturb their peace, and diſquiet them in their courſe, but he can never bring them back again to himſelf. *For greater is he that is in you, that he that is in the world.* Fear not, little Children, though you have to do with *Principalities and Powers*, with enemies more than your match, yet *greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. My Father is greater than all*; he hath you in his hand, and he hath committed you to the care of his Son; and *Jeſus Chriſt is greater than all.*

2. He ſaves from the wrath of God, the ſoreſt of Judgments. To eſcape the wrath of God is the concern of all fallen Creatures: *Oh Generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come.* There is no wrath like the wrath of God, nor any wrath from God like that which is to come: and the firſt intimation of the Goſpel wherever it comes, warns to flee from the wrath to come. Now by this Salvation Chriſt ſets his People free from the wrath of God which is to come. That God whom they have made their enemy, he makes to be their friend; that God whom they have ſet againſt them, he procures to be for them. True, the people of God may be under a ſenſe of his wrath, and in their ſad thoughts may

pray

pray as *David* did, *Correct me not in thy hot displeasure*; yet they are free from the wrath of God as a Judge, though not from the anger of God as a Father. Though God will not condemn them, and cast them off; yet God may afflict and chastise them; and that is their Priviledge. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastisest and instructest him out of thy Law.* We stand in need of Afflictions, and those afflictions are so far from being an argument of Gods wrath, that they are the fruit of his care for, and love to us. Every Son whom he loves he chastens. God cannot be content to see them that he loves go on in a course that is apparently ruining to their own soules, and therefore he stops and checks them by many sharp corrections.

3. He saves from Afflictions so far as that they may be to their prejudice. *For a little time if need be ye are in heavinesse, through manifold temptations;* 1 Pet. 1. 7. *For a little time, if need be.* So sooner nor no longer, nor any more of affliction than the state and condition of their Souls need.

3. He saves from sin, the worst of evils; this is the great Tyrant that usurps it over the Souls of all the Children of *Adam*. He saves them from the power of sin, he saves them from the guilt of sin; though he doth not save them from the very presence of sin; it may annoy and disquiet them, but it shall not ruine and destroy them.

4. He saves from death it self, which is the King of Terrors, from the sting of Death,

though

though not from the Grave and rottenness. The nature of Death is altered to all true Believers. Christ hath taken away that was at first threatned as a curse; so that in substance all that was as a curse is turned into a blessing to all that Christ takes care of. So much for the first, from what Christ saves.

Secondly, who are the persons whom Christ saves, we shall not look upon that Salvation which Christ bought out for the world to be of that vast latitude as to extend to every particular and individual person in the world, for that is contrary to the whole strain of the Scriptures: Do but consider that in *John* 3. 16, *God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.* (*Whosoever believeth in him.*) Every Believer, and none else but Believers; all that are such, and none but such. For, *he that believes not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.* So when the Gaoler comes trembling before *Paul* and *Silas*, and cryed out, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.* An Unbeliever is one that rejects that Salvation that the Gospel tenders and that Christ hath purchased. An Unbeliever he is in a state of condemnation, he is condemned already. Therefore those general expressions in the Scripture of Christs dying for the whole world, are to be understood only in opposition to the Nation of the Jews who were God's peculiar people, and to whom all God's saving mercies were of old confined.

Thirdly, How it is that Christ saves. He

saves as a Captain, by Conquest, subduing the strong man armed, under whose power we were held Captive: The strong man armed keeps possession of us till a stronger than he casts him out, and comes and binds him, and overcomes him: and this Christ hath done in Conquering Principalities and Powers; and thus he saves not only from the power of the Devil (for we were perfectly under the power of Sathan) thus he breaks off that yoke.

But then he saves as a Priest, by making satisfaction. He saves from offended Justice; we all of us are not only captive to Sathan, but Prisoners and Debtors to Divine Justice. Now Christ saves his people from this, by offering himself for his people once for all; and so the Salvation is not only a negative business in freeing us from those miseries that we lie under, but positive in intitling us to all those blessings and priviledges of which we are capable; *Those he hath purchased by his Blood*, Act. 20. 28.

Applic. 2. *Use*. Then this may inform us, that if Christ be the God and Saviour, upon what a sure foundation is the faith and hope of believers built; it is not upon the sand, but upon a Rock. How many false foundations do men build their hopes upon; these may stand them instead for a time, but when the wind rises, and the rain descends, and the floods flow in upon them, they will fall, and their fall will be very great. None but a God could possibly have gone through so great an undertaking. We had made our selves Debtors to an Infinite Majesty, and our Debts were such as could not be satisfied

ſed but by an infinite expiation. Our Saviour takes all upon him when he came to be the ſurety of his people, to take upon him all their Debts and to diſcharge them. None but an infinite Perſon was fit for ſuch a work. This is the Character that the Scripture gives of Chriſt, as one who is able and mighty to ſave; yea, to ſave to the uttermoſt: *Our Redeemer is the Lord of Hoſt, the Holy One of Iſrael is his Name.* If our Saviour be God, then this is matter of great encouragement to fly to him, let our caſe be never ſo difficult, perplexed and hopeleſs, yet as he is God, it cannot exceed his power to redeem and deliver. *Only believe and thou ſhalt ſee the Salvation of God*, Matth. 8. The poor Leper came to our Saviour (his was ſuch as he could not go to men, he was ſhut out from the Congregation) *and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean*: You cannot imagine a caſe to be more ſad than the caſe of the Lepers was, and yet his faith did bring him to Jeſus Chriſt, and it was his comming Chriw that did obtain his Cure, even of that diſtemper. O! therefore, how ſhould this comfort us againſt the greateſt of our ſpiritual enemies. Our Corruptions, though they are never ſo ſtrong, our oppoſitions though never ſo mighty; though Principalities and Powers be engaged againſt us, though earth and hell be up in arms againſt us, yet this anſwers all, our Saviour is God, all things therefore are ſubject to him.

2. *Uſe*. Of Exhortation, Be perſwaded then to fly to this God in all your diſtreſſes; and comfort your ſelves by p'acing all your hopes upon

upon him. God hath made many discoveries of the Glory of his Son hereafter. *He shall appear without sin to Salvation*: he appeared the first time as our surety to pay our Debts, but he shall appear the 2d time as one that hath already discharged that Debt, and sit down on the right hand of his Father in Glory: He appeared the first time as a sheep for the slaughter, he shall appear the second time as a Conqueror, trampling upon all his enemies: He appeared the first time in meanness: He shall appear the second time in Majesty. We should comfort our selves in the hopes that we have in such a Saviour, who is truly God. Whatever the afflictions and distresses of Gods people may be, yet he will work out enlargement for them; he can do it, and he hath promised to do it, yea, he hath undertaken to do it: if you do but on the one side put into the ballance all your doubts, fears, and Objections, and on the other side, do but think who it is that hath undertaken your Redemption and Salvation remember bring it is God your Saviour, this one word will weigh down all.

3. Lastly, This may be a use of terror to all the enemies of Jesus Christ; Christ is God, and therefore he is too great for them to cope with: *His enemies shall surely become his footstool*, and then shall he resign his Kingdom unto his Father, 1 Cor. 15. He is too great to be conquered, and he will certainly conquer his enemies, though it be in such a way many times, as does stagger the Faith of poor his Creatures.

Doctr.

Doctr. 3. *That the Gospel is the Doctrine of God our Saviour.*

The Apostle mentions this two-fold excellency in the Author of the Gospel, that he might (as it were) with a two-fold cord bind us to a greater heedfulness of its Counsels, and to a more strickt observation of its Rules. Our hearts are lose and slippery, especially to those things that concern our Souls: and it is not a single cord that will keep us within compass, and therefore the Apostle speaks here of the Gospel as the Doctrine of him who is our God and Saviour. In this description of the Author, he speaks enough to work upon all our affections at once: It is the Doctrine of God, and therefore it is not to be slighted. The Kings & great Ones of the World are in nothing so tender of as their Laws, they will not endure them to be trampled upon, and despised by their subjects. Oh! think what a vast difference there is between the great God and the highest Potentates that are here upon the earth; his Kingdom is over all, over all men, over all the Consciences of men (which no Prince can claim Dominion over) in this regard, as it is the Doctrine of God, therefore it is to be heeded and obeyed: every Doctrine of the Gospel hath the stamp of Gods Authority upon it. Now is it safe to fall under the displeasure of God to make him our enemy by breaking his Laws? By these two Characters that the Apostle gives of the Author of the Gospel, he would work upon our fear and love: These 2 are the principal affections in the Soul, which will

ingage

ingage all our endeavors of what kind soever they be. He is God and therefore must not be slighted, for he can crush us as a moth; it is a dangerous thing to fall under his displeasure: Now as the Gospel is the Doctrine of God, it commands awe and reverence from all that live under it. It commands our watchfulness, that we do not wander from it; it commands our diligence to stir up all our endeavours to obey it.

And then it is not only *the Doctrine of God*, but *of God our Saviour*; and hereby he would ingage our love and ingenuity. The whole design of the Doctrine of the Gospel is Salvation: He hath in the Gospel discovered himself Doctrinally to be a Saviour.

The whole sum of the Gospel is reduced to these six Heads, as to the scope and design of it.

1. To convince men of their own misery, this you have as the proper work of the Spirit, when he sets home the Gospel, *He shall convince the world of sin.* Men are apt to think that their condition is not so sad and miserable as indeed it is, they looking upon it as nature represents it to them: but the Gospel shews them that they are utterly lost and undone in themselves.

2. The Gospel lets them know the way of recovery; though they are miserable at present, yet it acquaints them notwithstanding their misery that they may be happy: and that is the second work of the Spirit, not only *to convince of sin, but also of Righteousness.*

3. A third design of the Gospel is, to direct us what way, means and course we should take

to

to put our selves in a capacity for the obtaining of this happiness, and that is by Faith and Repentance. That there is happiness to be had for poor miserable and undone Creatures by Jesus Christ, but it is only by Faith and Repentance.

4. The Gospel is an invitation to accept of Christ and of Salvation upon such terms, against which none can justly except: It is but to leave our sins, our burdens, which is our priviledge to leave. Our Saviour left Heaven and happiness for us, and we leave nothing but our bonds and fetters, and sicknesses for him, this is all that he requires.

5. The design of the Gospel is to remove all Discouragements, and take away all Objections which may make us shie of coming to Christ: we are lost Creatures, unable to repent and believe: there may be mercy and pardon had uponcondition of Faith and Repentance, but both these are gifts of God: now God hath promised to give both these to them that seek him for them.

6. In a word, the design of the Gospel is, (if it do not gain our Souls to Jesus Christ for their Salvation) to leave them more inexcusable as to Condemnation, to stop their mouths, and to leave them under stronger Convictions, that the blood of their Souls may lie upon themselves. So that all Gospel Revelations and discoveries center in this design, Mans Salvation. If there be any so stupid yet, (notwithstanding the discoveries of Christ, which may make them sensible indeed) they must needs be stocks and stones, and more stupid than the earth they tread upon:

upon: whom neither the Ministers of God nor mercies, nor severities will awaken, nor open their ears to instruction: all the truths revealed in the Gospel have a natural tendency to, and center in this one design, even the Salvation of lost Creatures.

This Doctrine consists of two parts:

That the Gospel is the Doctrine of God.

And the Gospel is the Doctrine of God our Saviour.

I shall speak to each of them a little distinctly.

1. The Gospel cannot be any other than the Doctrine of God, because it is an abreviation of the manifold wisdom of God, wherewith the Womb of his Counsels and Decrees were travelling before the Foundations of the World were laid: it was the contrivance of no other Wisdom than that of God: There are two Arguments to prove this:

1. Those intrinsick Arguments that may be drawn from the Nature of the Gospel; for there are many impressions of the Divine Majesty in the Gospel it self, both as to the matter and several parts of it.

1. Consider that it carries in it some impressions of the Divine Majesty in those deep and mysterious Truths that are therein revealed, which (when they are revealed) do exceed the capacity of any created understanding to reach, and therefore they must needs much more exceed the capacity of any created understanding to find out. God hath in his Gospel revealed such things as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor*

ther

ther can the heart of man conceive. These are such abstruse things that they could have no other Author but God himself; That God should become man; that the Lord of all things should take upon him the form of a Servant; that he that knew no sin should be made sin. That guilty Creatures should be saved by the righteousness of another, when they had no righteousness of their own. These are all Riddles and Mysteries, these are truths that have had many opposers: and therefore they have had so many opposers, because they are so much above reach of Reason. Now the excellencie of the Gospel appears in this, because the truths therein revealed are so sublime and mysterious, *Without Controversie great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the flesh,* 1 Tim. 3. 16.

2. From that exactness of holiness the Gospel requires. All the Books of Philosophers and others that prescribe holiness, are many of them unsound, and all of them put together defective. True, the Masters of them (the Learned Persons among the Philosophers) have many flowers in their Gardens, but withal they have many weeds. But the Gospel is a Garden wherein there is no weeds; there is no kind of defect in those Flowers that you meet with there; all defects are made up. If I should propound to you the several rules both of the Platonical, and Stoical Philosophers, many things (it is true) are commendable in them, but all are mixt, and all put together are imperfect; they are no compleat Rule: But the Gospel of Christ, you finde in *Titus* 2. 12. *It teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts,*

Lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. These three expressions amount higher than all the Rules that were invented by men. So 1 *Pet.* 1. 15. *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* It implies a similitude but not an equality, that is impossible; an universality of holiness, but not an equality. So in *Phil.* 4. 8. *Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, pure, lovely, of good report, think on these things.* How? to make them your great business. The Gospel of Christ is higher in its precepts than all other Rules than ever were prescribed.

2. It is larger in its extent, it reacheth not only the outward but inward man which no humane Laws can reach. St. *Paul* tells us, *he had never known sin but by the Law of God,* Rom. 7. Now this shews it is from God, because it reacheth the heart and Conscience. To abhor an unjust act, or an act of violence comes within the Rules of Moral Philosophers; but to abhor the thoughts of any thing that is evil, is proper only to the Rules of the Gospel.

3. The Arguments by which the Gospel presseth this exactness of holiness: No man did either promise or threaten such things as God in the Gospel does. Princes may threaten upon the pain of their high displeasure, but God threatens upon pain of everlasting ruine and destruction. Princes may threaten what evils are within the reach of their power, in case of disobedience to their Laws and Government; but God threatens like himself, like a God. So the

Promises

Promiſes are ſuch as none but God can make; the Promiſe of everlaſting happineſs, *Matth.* 5. To how many diſpoſitions our Saviour hath promiſed bleſſedneſs. Now bleſſedneſs is in the power of none to beſtow upon us, but only in that God who is in himſelf bleſſed, and who is the Author of that happineſs his Creatures are capable of. By all this it appears evidently, that the Goſpel can be no ther than the Goſpel of God; he who cannot only ruine the body, but whoſe power reach the Soul, that can make it happy or miſerable to all eternity; and that propounds threatnings and promiſes ſutable to a ſtate after this life.

4. The diſcoveries the Goſpel makes of the worth of our Souls; all men are very intent about the concerns of their bodies; if they be ſick, the Phyſitian muſt be ſent for, no means ſhall be neglected, but all courſes uſed to recover them from under their ſickneſs: but their Soul concerns are things that moſt men little look after. Now there is nothing that does ſo convince us of the worth of our Souls as the Goſpel doth; that tells us, that Jeſus Chriſt thought them worth the laying down his life for, the ſhedding of his precious blood for; and God thought them of that valu, that he did not ſpare his only Son, but gave him to die for them, there is no ſuch Argument to convince us of the excellencie of our Souls as Goſpel-Arguments are.

5. Conſider the terms upon which the Goſpel propounds recovery and happineſs, and re-

ſtoration to loſt Creatures; they are ſuch as are moſt conſiſtant with Reaſon: But what are thoſe terms? Repentance and Faith. The terms that others propound are vaſtly wide and different from theſe, but Repentance and Faith have the cleareſt evidence of Reaſon above all other terms whatſoever. In the Sinners reconciliation to the great God, without Repentance, what plea can ſinners make to God, but only that they may provoke God to with-hold every thing of mercy from them; without Repentance to come to God & to beg pardon, it is but to ask leave to ſin againſt God afreſh, and to go on in thoſe ways and courſes that are highly offenſive to him. And ſo for Faith, this alſo carries the cleareſt evidence of Reaſon with it; for poor Creatures that have offended an infinite Majeſty, for them to expect mercy from that God whom they have offended. Now the Goſpel tells us of a ſufficient price, equivalent, nay more than an equivalent price, and ſatisfaction for all offences & injuries done to Divine Juſtice. If we by faith lay hold upon Jeſus Chriſt, by ſuch a faith as doth intitle us to him, it may be well with us both here and for ever; but other terms and conditions (as the Popiſh penances, and voluntary humilities, and mortifications, and the like) what are they if they were ten thouſand times more than any Creature can perform in point of compenſation to Divine Juſtice? Alas! they are nothing: it is only by Jeſus Chriſt that we can be accepted, and ſatisfaction can be made to Gods Juſtice.

6. The ſtrange kind of efficacie that this word

word hath upon the Souls of sinners; how doth it amaze and affright, and alter and change them? How doth it make them new Creatures? then when God concurs with it by his Spirit, *Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified*, 1 Cor. 11. but it is by the Spirit of God; what a mighty change doth the Doctrine of the Gospel make upon the hearts of sinners when the Spirit of God goeth along with it: to give you some instances of it, as *Zacheus* of a covetous person became a self-denyer and makes restitution to the full, even to fourfold. *Mary Magdalen* who was possessed with so many Devils, what an eminent Saint did she become afterwards? So St. *Paul* of an enraged Persecuter, what an eminent Apostle did the Gospel make him to be, when it came to him in power? They who have delighted like so many swine to wallow in the mire of their lusts, have had their frames and tempers so altered, that nothing is delightful and pleasing to them but those spiritual Comforts and Enjoyments against which they have had the greatest enmity in their former inclinations.

2. I shall prove this by some Arguments, that the Gospel is the Doctrine of God.

1. That the Gospel should meet with any acceptance in the world. For what is the Doctrine of the Gospel? It is a Doctrine contrary to humane Reason, and cross to humane interest and our worldly and natural inclinations. One would think it a strange thing, if a man should go about to persuade a rich man to become poor, and great men to become low and mean, and those that flourish in the world to

cast off the world, you would think this Gospel should never meet with any entertainment from men that have their wits about them. Now such is the Doctrine of Christ, and yet it hath done all this. St. *Matthew*, and several of the Apostles were in a gainful & thriving course for a livelihood (as to this world) in a prosperous condition, but they renounced and *left all and followed Christ*; others there were who were engaged in curious Arts, *who came and burnt their Books*. Now to part with those things that are so pleasing to nature, and to entertain the Gospel which crosseth all our natural inclinations, must needs be distasteful and unacceptable to flesh and blood; this proves it to be of God.

2. That this Gospel should make so great a progress in the world though it hath been opposed and persecuted, though it hath met with multitudes of enemies, though the earth & hell have been set against it, yet that it hath gained upon its adversaries, it should still prevail, it is an argument that it is of God, that it should be preserved so long, considering the attempts of its enemies against it. It was notable Counsel that *Gamaliel* gave the Jewish Councel who were met together to take councel against *Peter* and the Apostles, to take some speedy course for the ruining of their Persons, and the obstructing of their Doctrine, *Acts* 5. 38. *Refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this counsel, or this work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God you cannot overthrow it*. Now this is an Argument that this Gospel is of God, that it hath had so many enemies and opposers, and yet it hath been

been preserved & prospers, & got ground of its enemies, How have all *Dagons* fallen before this Ark: Great is Truth and it shall prevail.

3. That poor Creatures, should be so enabled and supported as to bear Testimony to the truth of it: as to part with their estates, liberties and lives, and all dear to them, and that with so much courage, and chearfulness, and that by such means the Gospel should thrive, which have been used to suppress it.

I grant that men under their mistakes may be very confident and bold, even to the suffering of death for them; but they have wanted those heights of comforts and those raptures of joy, which the suffering people of God have met with in their sufferings, which cannot be paralled in any kind of History.

The second branch of the Doctrine is this:

That it is the Doctrine of God, *our Saviour.*

Every thing of the Gospel enters in and levels at this as its design, mans Salvation. I shall mention three things to clear this:

1. There is nothing that discovers sin to be so odious and abominable, so hateful to God, so destructive to us, and so dangerous a thing to us as the Gospel; its odiousness appears by its hatefulness to God, and by the price which our Saviour paid when he took upon him his peoples sins; it cost him his blood and those agonies and pains that cannot be expressed how great they were: now the glass of the Law presents sin very dangerous, but the glass of the Gospel much more dangerous.

There are these three things to be considered concerning Jesus Christ.

1. He had no sins of his own to suffer for, but for his peoples by way of imputation.

2. The taking the sins of his people upon himself in a subserviencie to the gracious design of Gods decree.

3. Those sins were so heavy upon him, that they caused him to suffer those agonies and pains which none but himself could endure. Now this speaks *sin to be exceeding sinful*, exceeding odious to God, and dangerous to us; when Justice it self could not any other ways be satisfied but by his sufferings. This speaks sin to a thing hateful, abominable, and dangerous; it renders sin odious, there is nothing but sin that can undo us: therefore God tells his antient people, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self*: that which others could never have done, that which I would not have done, even that thou hast done against thy self by thy sins.

The Gospel propounds the only remedy against sin, it represents sin odious, and it represents Jesus Christ every way sufficient to deliver us from sin. *He shall save his people from their sins.* The Gospel is therefore a Message of glad Tydings, because it tells us how sin may be pardoned: all the Rules of humane Invention could never reach this great truth, how sin may may be pardoned and Justice satisfied, and how infinite wrath may be appeased.

3. It appears to be the Doctrine of our Saviour, because it takes off all those discouragements that might keep us at a distance from Christ

Christ, and the making use of those Rules that the Gospel prescribes us for the obtaining of salvation. There are two great discouragements that lie upon all awakened sinners. The one is the sense of their own unworthiness.

Object. *Alas! says the poor Soul, I that am such an unworthy Creature that have carried it so towards God, how can I expect mercy?*

Sol. Now the Gospel discovers free Grace to the full, and though we have nothing to make any amends for the wrongs that we have done to Divine Justice, yet Christ hath done enough on our behalf.

Obct. 2. *But we are poor weak impotent Creatures, Repentance and Faith is our duty, but they are beyond our strength and power to perform.*

Sol. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior to give Repentance and remission of sins, Acts 5. 31. he tells us how we may come to believe and repent.

Applicat. 1. By way of Information, if the Gospel be the Doctrine of God, and the Doctrine of God our Saviour; Then certainly it deserves our whole man. It is said of some kinde of studies that they deserve our whole concernment about them; it is certain that this Doctrine doth deserve our utmost diligence in searching into the Mysteries thereof: How do many break their sleep, and beat their brains, and disquiet their rest, and emacerate their bodies, and all to purchase a little knowledge in the things of Nature? Oh! what paines does become us to take in searching into the Scriptures and in being acquainted with the Gospel

of Christ. Nay, it deserves not only our utmost endeavours in point of diligence in inquiring into it but our most enlarged affections in embracing it. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation: it is worthy of all acceptation, the heartiest and utmost welcome that we are able to give it.

Again, it deserves our most thankful improvement in making suitable returns for such a mercy, *in having a conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ*, Phil. 1. 27. *Only let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel.*

2. By way of reproof to several hearers of the Gospel. As they that do not hear as the Doctrine of God our Saviour, as if it was not a Message of such glad tidings. It reproves all careless hearers that come and spend a little time in attending upon the Gospel preacht, but never after regard the truths that are preacht to have them fixt upon their hearts, and to bring forth fruits in their lives.

It reproves all nice hearers, that are dainty and curious, that cannot be satisfied with wholesome food, unless it be neatly dress't up to them.

It reproves all Critical hearers that come to hear the Gospel and not to be judged by it, but to judge of the Ministers parts and gifts.

It reproves all slothful hearers that come and give attendance on the Gospel, but carry away little impression by it upon their Souls, and that do not make it their business so to do.

In a word, it reproves all hypocritical hearers and this takes in all those that come and give the

Gospel

Gospel a hearing, but that is all they do. We are to hear to live: *And your Souls shall live.*

The third Use, Exhortation.

Oh! labour to be setled in this great Truth, That the Gospel is the Doctrine of God and of God our Saviour. The Gospel hath every thing in it that may Command awe and reverence from us on the one hand, and love and obedience on the other. It is the Doctrine of God, and therefore it requires awe and reverence, and it is the Doctrine of God our Saviour, and therefore requires our love and chearful acceptance. Oh! was this truth but throughly believed, what strange wonders might the Gospel do in the Conversations of men. How would it Conquer all prejudice against it? How would it destroy all those false foundations that men build their hopes upon, and make way for Christ to take hold of their hearts, therefore labour to be fixt in the belief of this great Truth, that *the Gospel is the Word of, & God the Doctrine of God our Savior.*

Doctr. 4. *That this Doctrine of God our Saviour is a Priviledge so eminent, that it both deserves and requires the utmost diligence of them that live under it, to adorn it according to the capacity wherein they are.*

Three things are to be spoken to in the opening of this Doctrine.

1. That it is a priviledge very eminent to enjoy and be acquainted with this Doctrine of God our Saviour.

2. That it is the duty of all that live under this Doctrine to adorn it, to beautifie it, to ren-

der

der it amiable and lovely, to do what they can to gain it credit and reputation.

3. Though there be difference in Persons some of a higher, and some of a meaner capacity, yet it concerns all to do what they can to adorn this Doctrine of God our Saviour.

1. That it is an eminent priviledge to enjoy this Doctrine of God our Saviour, it is mentioned as the great Priviledge of the Jews, *Rom.* 3. 2. *Unto them were committed the Oracles of God.* This single Priviledge the Apostle magnifies to the heigth; this was the favour wherein God commended his love to them above others, *Psal.* 147. 20. *He hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them.* It is called the Grace (that is) the favour of God: So in the Verse next the Text, *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all men*; that is, this Doctrine of Grace, or the Grace of God hath appeared in vouchsafeing this Gospel: and so *Jude* 3 *vers.* Christians are commanded to *contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, the word in the Greek is, τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ, which was once out of the favour of God vouchsafed and committed to the Saints.

And that it is so eminent a Priviledge to live under this Doctrine of God our Saviour, I shall prove by three Arguments.

1. From the grand matters wherein this Doctrine doth instruct us.

2. From the grand oppositions that all the enemies of Gods people have made against this Doctrine, whereby they have laboured to de-

prive

prive the Church of God of so great a mercie.

3. From the singular Providence of God in ordering things so that the Church should not be destitute of this Doctrine to the end of the world, from so many ages past since the publication of it, and we our selves may be witnesses of it.

1. It is an eminent priviledge because of the grand matters this Gospel instructs us in: it is called the Doctrine of Salvation; and the Doctrine of Godliness; it is a Doctrine that teacheth us *how we may be good, and how we may do good, and how we may enjoy for ever all that we call good.* Now these three things are of a vast comprehension, and in all these it is infinitely transcending all the instructions of the most wise Moralists, and the capacity of all humane accomplishments. However the Philosophers in their time, and others in after times have by their endeavours gained renown to their names by this attempt, yet how short have their Aphorismes come of the Gospel, and what defects are there in their Rules, in comparison of this Doctrine of God our Saviour. Though in some things they have hit the right, yet that light that was in them is as far different from the light of the Doctrine of God our Saviour as the light of a rush Candle differs from the Sun at noon day. Now what ever was spoken of any of those matters contained in the Gospel by them obscurely, this Doctrine of God our Saviour speaks out fully and clearly. I shall shew in eight or nine instances thereof, those great

great Principles wherein the design of this Doctrine of God our Saviour is to establish poor Creatures.

1. That every mans truest self is his Soul. This is a principle often inculcated in this Doctrine; most men take their lusts for themselves, and therefore our Saviour when he would shew the necessity of self-denial he calls to the plucking out of right eyes, and to the cutting off our our right hands. These are our very selves, the limbs and members of us; Our lusts are as the whole body of corruption is compared in the Scripture to the whole man; for it is called the old man: as a man consists of several members, so by reason of the corruption of our Nature every lust is called our Member, every part of man being corrupted, *Ephes.* 4.21. *Put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.* So the work of Mortification is commanded in the Members, *Col.* 3.5. it branches forth this old man in its several members, as *fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, Idolatry*, and the like. Sinners are apt to account their lusts themselves; their pride, and ambition, &c. and if they be toucht in any of these sins, it is as a dagger to their very hearts.

Again, others account their natural selves themselves; though not their corrupt members, thus did that rich person, *Luke* 12.19. he speaks to his Soul, *saying, Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years*, &c. he thought these to be proper food for his Soul, *for himself*. That which any man makes his chief Idol, or that which is the reigning lust in any particular person, that

sin

sin is predominate in any person, that he is apt to account himself, and is very tender and nice of, and is not willing that it should be prejudiced or hurt. But it is the common Language of the Scripture to speak of the Soul, as the man, as if it was the person. The Soul being the principal part of man, it is frequently put for the whole man: *Gen.* 14. 21. *The King of Sodom said, give me the Persons*; and when *Abraham* discomfited those five Kings, and rescued *Lot* that was taken by them, in the Hebrew it is, *Give me the Souls*, Souls is taken there for the persons, *Genes.* 17. 14. *That Soul shall be cut off from his people*: even those that should despise or neglect Circumcision, which was then an institution of God in force: the Soul that is the Person. *Gen.* 36. 6. *And Esau took his wives, and his sons and his daughters, and all the persons of his house*; in the Margin it is read, *and all the Souls of his house*; and so it is in the Hebrew, *Gen.* 27. 4. *That my Soul may bless thee before I die.* Gen. 46. 18. *These be the Sons of Leah, all the Souls of his Sons and Daughters*; that is, all the persons: and in *ver.* 18. *These are the Sons of Zilpah, even sixteen Souls*, that is sixteen persons. This is one great Truth, and this one principle, which (if it were firmly believed and faithfully improved) would carry us very far in adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour. Did men believe that their Souls are indeed themselves, then there would not be so much ado about the body in pampering it; this body is but the beast in man (as a French Writer speaks) it is poor flesh that must ere long be

Worms

Worms meat; therefore what account can be given of that niceneſs and delicateneſs of them whom all the art in the world cannot long prop up, but it will be meat for Worms. Again, why are we ſo much taken with ſenſual pleaſures, theſe are the pleaſures of them that are not themſelves: as it is ſaid of the Prodigal Son, *Luke* 15. 17. *when he came to himſelf*; he was not himſelf when he was taken with huſks and ſwines-meat, when thoſe things were pleaſing to him. But certainly, if our Souls be our ſelves, then moſt men are not themſelves that take care about their bodies, and minde thoſe things that are ſutable to that part of themſelves.

Again, why have men ſo many diſtracting cares for the getting and preſerving, and fears of loſing thoſe things that concern this outward man, it is becauſe this truth is not firmly believed. Oh! what a preventer would this be of all thoſe ſorrows for outward afflictions, and diſappointments in Creature comforts, and thoſe loſſes that we meet with in worldly enjoyments. Was this Principle firmly believed, that our Souls are indeed our ſelves, there would not be ſuch an indifferencie in us about our Souls. Conſider theſe two things, how great a difference the belief of this Doctrine of God would make, as to the things of our Souls: then we ſhould give all diligence, it would command our higheſt & utmoſt diligence about them: this I might bring from many Scriptures, *Give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure: Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, Prov. 4. 30. *This I ſay, Brethren, the time is ſhort it remains*

saineth that they have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoyce as though they rejoyced not: it commands moderation in our use of these outward comforts, and only earnestness in these Soul concerns. God makes a very great difference in these things in his Commands, but what a small difference do all men make in their practices: how much more intent and serious are men in the things that concern their meaner part, than in those things that concern their Souls, which is, themselves. Did men but take that 100 part of the pains for their Souls that they do for their bodies, it would be better with them than it is. We are commanded *first to seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness*: to seek first Soul mercies: I might mention many natural inferences that would flow from this one Principle which would carry us very far in the practice of holiness. How sad a bargain do they make that do hazard their Souls for very trifles. If a man should gain the whole World with the loss of his Soul, what a sad gain would that be; nay, it would be a loss to him, and that to purpose. But for how small a pittance of the World do men lose their Souls? this shews that they do not Judge their Souls themselves. However this justifies the Children of Wisdom, who can rather suffer than sin, who can part with anything but with God; who can undergoe any kind of losses, rather than the loss of spiritual blessings, and forfeit them. Oh! what admirable patience and courage hath appeared in the faithful Servants of God in all ages, who have

set

ſet their ſeal to this Truth with their lives and all that hath been dear to them.

Again, it ſhews that men live in a contradiction to this Principle, that if it go well with our Souls, it cannot go amiſs with us: If our Souls have but the light of God's countenance lifted up upon them, if they do but thrive in Grace, and be filled with Grace, what matter though our bodies be exerciſed with pains and aches and afflictions of all kind.

Again, it is a ſafe Rule to judge of all things by, according to the reference that they have to our Souls; to account thoſe things eminent and acceptable, and profitable to us that tend to the good of our Souls: As Ordinances and ſpiritual Opportunities, and liberty of acceſs to God in the duties of his worſhip and ſervice; theſe are to be eſteemed choice mercies becauſe theſe are the appointments of God for our Souls good; and for outward afflictions, when God by theſe does us good as to our Souls, we have cauſe to rank them amongſt our mercies, and to bleſs God for them, as *David* did, who ſaid, *It was good for me that I have been afflicted*, Pſ. 119. 71. *and in faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me: And bleſſed is the man whom correcteſt and teacheſt out of thy Law.*

Further, this one Principle that our Souls and our ſelves ſpeaks the greateſt cruelty in the world to be regardleſs of them; you will pity diſtracted perſons that cut, and gaſh, and wound their bodies, becauſe they know not what they do. May you not pity obſtinate ſinners upon higher account? Thoſe men that murder themſelves,

themſelves, and deſtroy themſelves. Our Law accounts them Monſters, and it makes it appear that they are ſo by running a ſtake through their bodies when dead. But all the cruely to the body is nothing to that of the Soul. Remember therefore this one Principle, that this Doctrine of God our Saviour would have us fix in our minds, that our Souls are truly our ſelves.

2. A ſecond Principle that this Doctrine of God our Savior teacheth us is this, That the happineſs of the Soul cannot conſiſt in any thing but in the enjoyment of God. This is one of thoſe Riddles that carnal men cannot underſtand; therefore *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* 49. *They that truſt in their wealth, and boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any mean redeem his brother, nor give to God a ranſome for him*: They are but poor helps, theſe things will ſtand us but in little ſtead. It is natural for all men to deſire happineſs, but becauſe our knowledge is weak, therefore thoſe deſires are confuſed and roving, *Pſa.* 4. 6, 7. *There be many that ſay, who will ſhew us any good*: this is the Language of many men; but becauſe of the darkneſs of mans underſtanding, therefore ſome think that good conſiſts in this, and ſome in that; but *David* whoſe underſtanding was enlightned and ſanctified, quickly determines the point, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenanc upon us.* Some ſeek after good, but they fix it in Corn and Wine, and the bleſſings of this life; but ſays *David*, *Let me have but the light of thy countenance, & thou wilt put more joy & gladneſs into my Soul, than in the time when their corn and*

mine encreaseth. So Psa. 73. 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon the Earth that I desire besides thee*; and it is no less than three times repeated in *Psal.* 96. *Cause thy face to shine upon us, and we shall be saved*, vers. 3. 7. 19. All the strength of Nature and common gifts cannot bring the Soul to the fountain of all good; and so the substance of all good, it is only the Doctrine of God our Saviour that can do this. The great design of this Doctrine is to lay man and all Creatures low, and only to advance God and Jesus Christ; and those upon whom this Doctrine doth powerfully prevail; it conquers all perverse reasonings and unbelieving thoughts in them, in so much that their Souls are brought to say with David in *Psal.* 16. 6. 7. *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places.* How fully was this holy man contented in this, not but that there are other things desirable in their places, for this Doctrine doth not teach us to be stocks and stones, but it doth not permit us to sit down with other enjoyments, nor to take up our rest in them; nor doth it permit us to be cast down when we are stript of other enjoyments, but it turns the bent and byas of the Soul, as I may so speak towards God, *Psal.* 63. 8. *My Soul followeth hard after God*; and it knows how to make up all its losses in God, though all be gone; though thou art such a poor person as that thou canst not call anything thine own, yet if thou canst call God thine own, thou canst make up all in him, as *David*, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. when all was gone, yet *he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.* This is the second Principle, that true happiness is no

where

where to be had but in God, it cannot be had in Creatures, no not in the confluence of Creature comforts. As *Job* speaks concerning all Creatures, *The height saith it is not in me, the depth saith it is not in me*; so we may say of all Creature enjoyments, though there is something of this nature that doth shew the vanity of all things here upon the earth, yet this truth is more clearly manifested and strongly inculcated by this Doctrine of God, than by any thing in nature. I shall shew some things wherein Nature may be satisfied from the common Principles of Reason, that the happiness of the Soul cannot consist in any thing but in the enjoyment of God.

1. The first Principle from Nature is this, Nothing can make us happy which a man may be without, and yet be happy; this excludes all things almost in the world, a man may be happy without riches, & therefore riches cannot make him happy; a man may be happy without greatness in the World, without the esteem of men, without worldly prosperity, without a thousand things which have nothing else to advance them in our esteem, but onely our own fancies. These are not bread, *Isaiah* 55. 2. *Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread*; these things below cannot profit nor relieve in the time of greatest need.

2. Nothing that a man may be cloyed and glutted with, can make him happy; nothing that is disquieting or troublesome to the Soul can be its happiness; there is nothing of all these outward things, but there may be a surfetting with them; and a superfluity of these things may be

as burdensome as to want a sufficiencie for support: a man may as well have too much of outward things, as too little for his comfort. The Prayer of wise *Agur* was good, he prayed against too much as well as too little, *Prov.* 30. there may be as much as may distract our thoughts with cares, and to make us slaves and drudges to them, and to deprive us of the comfort of what we have. It was *Augustus* complaint in his high condition, being the second Roman Emperor, *That he could never be at leisure for himself, because of his businesses*; and if I may speak of knowledge: Knowledge of all things is most pleasant and rational to a Creature; yet *Solomon* ranks this among the pieces of vanity, *Eccles.* 1. 18. *In much wisdom there is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow*: So for pleasures and all kinds of wordly enjoyments whatsoever, they cannot be pleasant to us should they be perpetuated, but we should need some intermission to sweeten them to us.

3. That which cannot satisfie all the desires of man cannot make him happy, and therefore nothing below God can make him happy; Man is a necessitous Creature, and nothing here below can supply his necessities; it must be a good adequate to all our necessities that can do it, and this only can be God.

4. Nothing that is unsutable to the Soul can be the happiness of it. Now the Soul is a spiritual being, therefore nothing but spiritual comforts, enjoyments, and refreshments are sutable to the Soul: for men to place their comforts in out-

outward things, is to forget themselves to have Souls.

5. Nothing that is disproportionable to the Soul in point of duration can be the happiness of the Soul. The Soul is immortal, and nothing that is mortal can be its happiness: *Deliver me from the men of this world*; wicked men are stiled the men of this world, they have *their good things here*, and they have all they are like to have; and therefore *David* made it his request to God, that he might be delivered from from them; that is, as to their condition. *O Lord deliver me from the men of this world, who have their portion in this life.* Now though these Principles be agreeable to Nature, and many of the Heathen have gone very far in owning and acknowledging of them, yet this Doctrine of God our Saviour is transcendent in these very truths themselves, because it doth improve, heighten, and advance these natural Principles, it makes them both more clear, and powerful, and convincing; it helps the Soul to a more inward sensation of these things, and perceive that there is nothing that can relish with it, or content it, or quiet it besides God himself.

2. It directs us how we that are afar of from God may be brought nigh to God: how we that are enemies by Nature (not only by evil works) evil hearts, by evil frames and dispositions may become friends. God and we are at a distance; *Can two walk together and not be agreed?* Now this Doctrine of God our Saviour shews us how all the difference between God and us may be taken up (*by Jesus Christ*) this is

the great delight of the Doctrine of God to reveal this to us, *Mat.* 1. 21. *His Name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his People from their sins.* This is the Salvation, for in saving from sin, he saves from all present and future miseries.

But, *How does Christ save from sin?*

By Justifying our Persons by his Blood in satisfying for all the guilt we have contracted.

2. And by sanctifying our Natures by his Spirit, in subduing those perverse and crooked dispositions that are in the hearts of all by nature.

Again, it points out how we may come to have an interest in Christ, and how Christ is willing to be ours if we are but willing to be his: He is willing to be our Saviour, if we are but willing to be his Subjects, and to accept of his Government.

It directs us where to go for strength to be able to make a full resignation of our selves to him, that we may go to the promises of God, and to the spirit of God and fetch strength from them.

3. That the full enjoyment of God is not in this world. The happiness of Gods people here is but in its infant state: the Apostle says, *Whilst we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord*: they that enjoy most of Gods presence here, have but a kinde of absence, if compared with the presence that they shall have of God hereafter, 2 *Corinth. ver.* 5. 6, 7. *We walk by faith and not by sight*: that is we have not the fruition of God in that fulness, but by faith we expect it; we have not

our

our happiness in hand, but we have it in hope; the knowledg that we have of God now is but in part, our graces are imperfect here, we see God now darkly, *as in a glass*, in the glass of his Creatures, in the glass of his Ordinances, in the glass of his Experiences; but then we shall see him *face to face*. Now the design of this Doctrine is not only to teach the people of God where to seek happiness, but also when to expect it: not in this world, but hereafter (though we are to strive after it here on earth. And though this Doctrine is unpleasing to many, who are all for present delights of this world, yet there is enough in it to prevent all such disparagements as some would cast upon it, and all such disheartning as the People of God are subject unto: This Doctrine tells us, that happiness is here only inchoative, but hereafter it will be Consummated; and that this future happiness is as sure (as if it was now enjoyed) to all who are truly called; & to ascertain this, God hath given his people many foretasts of their blessed estate hereafter, 2 *Cor.* 5. 5. *He hath given to us the earnest of his Spirit*: *viz.* The Graces and Comforts of his Spirit, those refreshings and revivings which only the Spirit of God can work in the hearts of his people; these are enough to support and secure them.

4. That the great work and business of Man here upon the Earth is to glorifie God; All things as they are of God, and by God, so they are to God, *Rom.* 11. *last.* 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* Every man hath his work ap-

pointed here upon the Earth, and this life is the time wherein this work is to be finished; therefore our Saviour saith, *John* 17. 4. *Father, I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* The work he had to do was to glorifie God: thus the same work is given proportionably to all Believers; *Our work is to purge our selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.* This is the design both of the Threatnings and Promises: all the parts of this Doctrine of God our Saviour is to engage us upon the serious undertaking of purging out of all filthiness, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. That it is the design of the threatnings is clear to all; and that it is the design of the Promises (saith the Apostle) *Wherefore having so many gratious Promises, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit.* All the kindness that that the Promises discover and hold out to us allow of no Latitude to sin and wickedness: no, they are the strongest engagements to Sanctity and Holiness that can be. [*Having these Promises*] what Promises are those? *I will be their God and they shall be my people*, 2 Cor. 6. 16. that one Promise is the sum and substance of all. So our work here upon the Earth is to mind especially the work of our Souls; this is a great and choice thing that God hath instructed us in. And also to promote the Spiritual good (especially) of others; not only to be blessed our selves, but to be blessings to others: that Gods Word may run and be glorified, not only amongst our selves but amongst others. In one word, our work here upon

on the Earth is to devote our whole selves, our all to Gods service; to give all we have to him, that holiness to the Lord may be written upon our hearts, and acted in our lives.

5. That it is impossible that we should ever live to so much purpose, so much to the true Comfort, and real Happiness, as by living unto God, and in Communion with him. The design of the Doctrine of God our Saviour, is to fix this Principle in our hearts: *As many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be upon them, and upon the whole Israel of God.* This is the Character of the whole *Israel* of God, that they do walk according to this Doctrine of God our Saviour.

6. Though there be many discouraging weaknesses and infirmities in the best of Saints, yet we are to hearken to what relief this Doctrine propounds against both: it is the Affliction of many a poor Soul (of every awakened Soul) that is gratious, it dare scarcely pray, or hear, or engage in any duty, because it finds so great unfitness and unsuitableness for duty: But this Doctrine directs us how we may be relieved, and how of weak we may be made strong, it directs us to go to the Spirit for its assistance, and to Jesus Christ for acceptance.

7. That all the Afflictions and Oppositions we can meet with in this world upon the account of our cleaving to God, are not so considerable as to render the ways of God unlovely. St. *Paul* had cast up the account, *Rom.* 8. 18. he tells us the result of his thoughts, after he had Computed, he had weighed and Considered what it would

would cost him to follow God fully, and what it would cost him to forsake God, and says, *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us.* 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. *Our light affliction which is but for a moment, works out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* This Doctrine of God our Saviour sets forth the glory of Heaven beyond what ever it was before, beyond what discoveries we are able possibly to make thereof. Now to know that glory in Heaven which the Saints shall enjoy; how will that recompence all the afflictions, troubles, and persecutions that may befall the people of God upon the account of their cleaving to God.

8. That there is an absolute necessity of living the life of Faith in all Conditions: In Prosperity not to be lifted up, but by faith to live upon God whilst we have other things to keep our hearts loose from them; so in adversity when we are stript of these things, still to keep our hearts in an equal poyse and frame: this is the life of Faith, these are the great Principles wherein this Doctrine of God our Saviour designs to establish us.

Arg. 2. It must needs be an eminent privilege to enjoy the Doctrine of God our Saviour, because of the many attempts of Sathan, and his instruments to rob the Church of God of so great a benefit: if it was not so great, Sathan would not be so busie to imploy his opposition against it: Sathan would be content that men should be great, and grow rich, so that their hearts do but go out after these things; but

he

be cannot that they ſhould enjoy the free uſe of the Goſpel. The Apoſtate Angels ſince they left their firſt ſtation, have uſed all devices to make Man as miſerable as themſelves; therefore compare *Job* 1. 7. with 2 *Pet.* 5. 8. in *Job* 1. 7. God asked Sathan, *Whence comeſt thou? Then Sathan anſwered the Lord, and ſaid, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* (this ſpeaks his diligence) and you find 2 *Pet.* 5. 8. *He goes up and down like a Roaring Lion ſeeking whom he may devour.* (this ſpeaks his deſign which he goes up and down in the earth for) he is a kind of an ubiquitary and continuall Spye, obſerving what mens deſigns, and diſpoſitions are, that he may accordingly ſute his Methods and Devices, and he goes up and down as a Roaring Lyon. Now becauſe Sathan well knows, and by experience finds that nothing hath more conduced to the recovery of Souls out of his power, and more hindred the increaſe of his Kingdom, nay nothing doth more endanger his final over-throw than this Doctrine of God our Saviour, therefore he is come down with much wrath againſt it, *Rev.* 12. 9, 12. *And the great Dragon was caſt out, that old Serpent called the Devil and Sathan which deceiveth the whole world, he was caſt out into the earth, and his Angels were caſt out with him*: and in *v.* 12. *The Devil is come down to you having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth he hath but a ſhort time.* It was ſpoken of thoſe times immediatly ſucceeding the Miniſtry of that great Apoſtle St. *John*, by whom this book was written Now this caſting down of Sathan, and the caſting out

of

of his Instruments (his Angels) is by the Doctrine of the Gospel: thus our Saviour sent out his Seventy Disciples to preach the Gospel, *Luke* 10. 17, 18. when they returned home again, they came with joy, saying *Lord, even the Devils are subject to us through thy Name*, ver. 18. *And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven*. The delusions of Satan can no more stand before the light of the Gospel, than *Dagon* could stand before the Ark: How do the mists and shades of the night vanish at the appearance of this Sun? It is no wonder then that Satan bestirs himself to his utmost to hinder the preaching of the Gospel which he knows will be the pulling down of his own Kingdom. There are three wayes or courses that Satan hath usually taken to hinder the spreading, and endeavoured the extirpation of this Doctrine.

1. By engaging the Princes and Potentates, and great Ones of the World to do their utmost to suppress it. This is that which was foretold by the Prophet *David* long since, *Psal.* 2. 1, 2. *The Heathen rage, and the People imagine a vain thing: the Kings of the Earth set themselves, and the Rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Annointed*: But all is but a vain thing. But this shews the Combinations that Satan would raise up against the Church, and that amongst the great Ones of the Earth; and this is partly by their Laws and Edicts, prohibiting the searching into this Holy Writ, these Oracles of God: See how the Jews had laid their heads together and met in Councel to sup-

press

press this Doctrine in those times; how they *scourged and imprisoned*, and used all kind of *barbarism*, to prevent the *spreading* of the Gospel, as you may read in the Book of the *Acts*, *Acts* 5.27,28. and 4. 18. *They commanded them not to speak at all, nor to teach in the Name of Jesus.*

Again, not only by their Edicts forbidding the preaching of the Gospel, but farther by raising up fierce persecution against the Gospel. How great a crime is it at this day among the Papists to have a Bible in the House? How many in Queen *Maryes* days lost their lives upon this very account? it was not their persons that they laboured to destroy so much, as their Principles: for upon their renouncing the Faith of the Gospel they did escape: you may read how all along in those times of Persecution they might have escaped all those dangers, if they would but have parted with this Gospel and Doctrine of God our Saviour, they might have preserved their lives; but as it is said *Heb.* 11. 35. where you read of the cruelties that were exercised towards the people of God, *they were tortured, sorely afflicted, not accepting deliverance.* Was not deliverance desirable? Yes, but they could not have it upon any other terms, but upon such as were unsafe to their Souls: and what was it to preserve a momentany life, and to run the hazard of the everlasting welfare of their Souls? on these terms they did not, they durst not accept deliverance; and these have been the terms all along that the enemies of the Church have stood upon, raising up Seducers to corrupt this Doctrine; when he cannot hinder

this

this Doctrine from spreading, he labours to hinder its spreading to advantage. How many Seducers hath Satan raised up in all Ages, whom by he hath laboured to mingle their poyson with this milk, how active he hath been and doth continue to be, doth appear by the many Cautions and warnings that St. *Paul* all along gives the Church against them, *Ephes.* 4. 14. *That henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* Observe, Satan employes his Emissaries; they are their Craft-masters, they are notable Artists, very skilful to do mischief. The sleights of men and cunning craftiness: It is a Metaphor from Dice, an Art that some have of cogging a Dye, that so they may make it answer to what cast they please) such Crafts-masters are these Seducers, they are very subtle and dextrous in their Stratagems to deceive unawares. 2 *Pet.* 1. 16. *For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his Majesty*; we used none of their Arts and cunning. 2 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *But there were false Prophets also among the people, as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them*: and so he goes on describing both their Persons, and the danger that accompanies their endeavours: 2 *Tim.* 2. 17. *And their word will eat as doth a canker*, or *Gangrene*; now a Gangrene suddenly over runs the whole

unless it be prevented, it presently seizes the vitals, and so kill; and so do those seductious and corrupt Principles by the subtilty and Art of those instruments of Satan which he hath imployed in all Ages of the Church: the Reason why truth is longer a spreading than error is, because truth is contrary to our corrupt Nature, but error is suitable to them; our hearts are as tinder to receive what is bad, every spark kindles the fire, but they are as wet wood to receive those sparks of light that God from his Words darts into them. *Epiphanius* & others have taken a great deal of pains in shewing how in all Ages downward ever since the times of the Apostles, the Devil hath been at this kinde of work, and he hath imployd his instruments herein: and we are not without experiences in our dayes of those persons that deny the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and that would make the death and sufferings of Christ, and faith in Christ of no effect. This is *to deny the Lord that bought them and to bring damnation upon themselves.*

3. There is a third way whereby Satan labours to obstruct the spreading of the truth, and to suppress the Doctrine of God our Saviour, and that is by exercising his utmost cunning himself by working upon mens corruptions, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3 4,5. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.* Observe, he hath a notable art in blinding the eyes of men with corrupt mistakes, and subtle insinuations. Chap. 11. 3. *I am jealous over you, lest by any means as the Serpent beguiled Eve*

by

by his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. St. *Paul* feared the most setled Christians; he was jealous of them, it was out of the abundance of his love to, and care for them: Now Satans great designe is, if he cannot keep us from this Doctrine, then he labours to corrupt it, and thereby to hinder the efficacie of it, and so to render this Doctrine of Salvation instrumental to promote our destruction: And thus those many designes of Satan against this Doctrine, and his diligence to carry on those designes, is a great Argument of the eminencie of the priviledge of enjoying it.

3. *Argument.* The wonderful Providence of God, and his perpetual care in preserving this Gospel notwithstanding all the attempts that Hell hath made against it: Be sure if any created power or policie (for what policie or power is greater than Satans) could have prevail'd against this Doctrine of God our Saviour, then had not been the least part of this Doctrine remaining in the world at this day. This consideration proves that this Doctrine of God is excellent. *Act.* 5. 39. the counsel of *Gamaliel* to the Jews, *If it be of God it will stand, ye cannot overthrow it.* Now it is an Argument that this Doctrine is of God, because it hath stood so long, for above 1600 years; and it is an argument that it is the Doctrine of God, because it is of such great concernment to the Church; if it had not been an eminent and needful priviledge, he would not have employed his providences so constantly about the preservation of

need

We read when the Israelites had no farther need of Miracles, God did not then continue to work Miracles for that people; assoon as ever they had the parched Corn, the fruits of the Land, Manna ceased the self-same day: God would not then be at the expence of a Miracle, though they came from him as easily as words do from men; he would not be at the expence of a Miracle but for his Peoples necessity. This Doctrine of God our Saviour is said to be the Foundation upon which the Church is built; *Thou art Peter, and upon this Doctrine*, this *Confession* of thine, *I will build my Church*. Eph. 2. 20. *And are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner-stone*. Upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles; How can that be? For it is said, *other Foundation can no man lay than what is laid*, &c. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is no Name given under Heaven whereby we can be saved*.

Answ. Divines here distinguish between a personal Foundation and a Doctrinal Foundation; Jesus Christ is the only personal Foundation, the only Person that can be built upon, and the Doctrine of Christ in the Gospel, that is the only doctrinal Foundation, and if we build upon this, we build aright.

I shall give you three Instances to shew how wonderfully the Providence of God hath appeared in the preservation of this Doctrine of God our Saviour.

1. In that he hath preserved those Books of Scripture wherein this Doctrine is contained

from utter ruine and extirpation: How many choice and admirable Books (wherein hath been excellent pieces of Learning) have perished, and been eaten out by the ruſt of time? Yet thoſe Books have had no Edicts put forth against them to endanger the owning of them, nor againſt the advancing of the ſtudy of them: Nay, they have had great incouragement to promote thoſe ſtudies, and in all reſpects the greateſt care imaginable to preſerve them; but they have all periſhed, and are utterly gone: but this Goſpel hath been preſerved, notwithſtanding all the attempts and deſigns againſt it: we have no Books of Antiquity and ancient ſtanding as the Goſpel is: It is a ſmart paſſage of one ſpeaking of the improvements made in all pieces of Knowledge; (ſays he) *It is but a vain kind of boaſt to ſpeak of augmenting knowledge, ſince all thoſe new editions that have been made of any ſcience, are but the recoveries of what formerly hath been loſt*: as *Solomon* ſeems to intimate, when he ſaith, *there is nothing new under the Sun.* But God himſelf takes care of theſe Books, and this proves that they contain in them thoſe Truths that are neceſſary for the Churches good, for the converſion and bringing in of wandring Souls, and for the edifying and building up of thoſe that are brought in, and ſo long as there is any one Soul either unbrought in, or unbrought up, ſo long as any ſingle Member of Chriſt continues in a ſtate ſhort of perfection, the Goſpel ſhall continue. God hath promiſed, *Eph.* 4. 11. That Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Paſtors, and Teachers *ſhall be in the*

Church

Church for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. So long as we are short of perfection, so long shall these helps continue. Now had not God taken care of the Gospel all those instructions that are contained in *it* had long since been buried in oblivion.

2. As God hath been careful to preserve these Books from extirpation, so also from corruption; that as not any part of it hath been destroyed, so no false Principles have been infused: and this is as great a wonder as the other, that though the powers of earth and hell have been bent against it, though they have neither wanted malice nor power, yet they have neither destroyed and extirpated it, nor brought in another Gospel to the exclusion of it, though there were early attempts against it, as you find *Gal.* 1. 6. 7. *I marvel that you are so soon removed unto another Gospel.* This hath been one of Satans ways to set up new Doctrines quite contrary to this, thereby thinking to prevail, but such hath been the care of God concerning this Doctrine, that it is observed as a remarkable thing by Ecclesiastical Writers, that in every age of the Church, when Satan hath raised up some dangerous Instrument to corrupt this Doctrine, God hath raised up another eminent Instrument for the defence of this Gospel; as when *Arrius* was so busie in crying down the Divinity of Christ, God then raised up *Atha-*

stine as an Antidote against that poysonous error. And so when *Pelagius* did endeavour to put down Free-grace, and advance and raise up Nature, God then raised up St. *Austine* for the defence of the Truth. In all Ages of the Church God hath taken care to preserve this Doctrine from being corrupted. Now that this Doctrine that hath had so many enemies, and hath been so strongly opposed, and those enemies have been countenanced, and had all the humane advantages that this world could afford, yet that poor contemptible, despised, and persecuted instruments should preserve this Doctrine from corruption, and that this Doctrine should remain as the three Children in the fiery furnace, having not a hair of their heads singed, this is the wonderful Providence of God.

3. In animating so many thousands to bear witness to this Doctrine with their lives. Mr. *Fox* in his Martyrlogie tells us, to reckon up all the Saints that have sealed to the truth of this Doctrine with their blood in the several ages of the Church would amount to no less than five thousand for every day in the year. But this hath been observed by all, that not only men of courage, but timorous women, and not only the Learned, but illiterate; not only the Souldier, but others have been animated and assisted by God, that they have rather parted with their lives, than these Truths: this was the great Controversie in the *Maryan* Persecution. And it is impossible that this Doctrine should ever have passed through so much fire and blood in so many Ages, if an extraordinary Spirit had not sup-

supported them, and enabled them to bear their testimony. These Arguments shew that it is a Doctrine of very great concernment to the Church and People of God.

Partic. 2. That the great and principal acknowledgment that God expects from all that do partake of this great and eminent privilege is, that they should do their utmost to adorn this Doctrine of God our Saviour. To adorn it, what is that? To render it amiable, beautiful, and lovely: that this Doctrine may be more taking with them that are strangers to it: as in *v.* 5. that the Word of God be not blasphemed: and the chief Commendation we can do to this Doctrine is practical Conformity to it, as the Apostle advises, *Eph.* 4. 1. *I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.* That you walk becoming the Gospel, *Phil.* 1. 27. *Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel*: that it be meet, that it be such as may adorn it. And how this may be, how we may adorn the Gospel, how we may walk worthy of the Gospel the Apostle tells us, *Phil.* 1. 11. *being filled with the fruits of Righteousness.* This is to adorn the Gospel, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *That they should shew forth the the virtues and praises of him who hath called them*, &c. as an apt Scholar, that is much improved in Learning is a praise to his Master. St. *Paul* calls the *Corinthians* his Commendation, so a gratious Christian is a Commendation to the Doctrine of Christianity. These Rules are sublime and high, this is the Christians Motto, we do not speak great words but we live great things.

This is the charge that our Saviour gives to all his hearers, but especially to those he imploys in the capacity of the Apostles, *Mat.* 5 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* to glorifie this Doctrine is by giving occasion to to others to glorifie it, to have it in high esteem; our Saviour there doth not perswade men to seek vain glory, to seek applause and esteem with men, to gain reputation among others, but that they may glorifie God, *Let your light so shine before men*, &c. This light may be understood of the light of the Doctrine of God, but it must also be understood of the light of their Conversations. Now to shew wherein all Christians are in a capacity of adorning this Doctrine of God our Saviour. In general.

By walking exactly according to the Rules of this Doctrine, as the councel of the Apostle is, *Eph.* 5. 15. *See then ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.* To walk circumspectly is to walk exactly, as the word ἀκριβῶς in the Greek signifies. Walk exactly and this is your wisdom, and not to walk exactly is the greatest folly: *not as fools, but as wise.* And oh what a lovely thing would Christianity appear to be in the eyes of them that are strangers to it, were there but that exactness in our lives that the Doctrine by its several Rules teacheth. I shall speak to three things in opening this,

1. As

1. As to our Carriage to towards God.

2. Towards others, { To our Enemies. / To our Friends.

3. Towards our selves.

1. In respect of our Carriage towards God in following God fully. This Doctrine teacheth us to serve God with all our might and strength: this is exemplified by several paterns in Scripture. *My soul followeth hard after thee, thou art my right hand.* And of *Caleb* it's said, *Numb.* 14. *He followed God fully.* We must not only serve God in some duties, which have nothing of reproach in them to our names, and nothing of prejudice to our concerns, but even in those duties by the observance of which we run the greatest hazard, as to all that is dear to us in this world: and to mind these heartily, and in good earnest, and because God Commands them, and because they are his Institutions.

2. In shunning whatsoever might offend God; *Psal.* 119. *I hat every false way. You that love the Lord, hate evil. Psal.* 79. 10. If there be any thing of love in the Soul to God, there cannot but be hatred of what ever is contrary to him: your hatred is never right unless it be grounded upon principles of love to God, *You therefore hate evil because ye love God: How can I do this wickedness and sin against God*, said *Joseph. Joseph* might have prevented many dangers, which, because of his too much complyance with his Mistresses temptation, he involved himself in; but this Doctrine taught him not to allow himself

in any thing that was offensive to God. And so should we stand upon our watch and guard against those that are sensible of the corruptions of nature, and the activeness of Sathan to make use of those Corruptions to deceive us, and to draw us rrom God: and this Rule hath been practised by the people of God all along. *Job* made a Covenant with his eyes, *David* kept his mouth as with a bridle; both of them by these Metaphorical expressions do signifie their watchfulness, and care to keep themselves from being led a side into sin, or any thing that might be offensive to God. This is to adorn the Gospel when we thus carry it towards God.

3. Not only to serve God, but to delight in his Service, and to take complacencie in every duty we perform, *Delight thy self also in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thine heart.* It is a dreadful Judgment that God threatned to execute upon his people *Israel* because they would *not serve him with chearfulness in the abundance of all things, therefore they should serve their Enemies in hunger, and cold, and nakedness*, in the want of all things. They changed their Master, and it was a sad change too. It was the Commendation of the Apostles (in those times of persecution) when they could not profess the Gospel, but it would cost them dear, yet, (whatever their food was it had good sawce) *they eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, rejoycing in the Holy Ghost.* This duty hath been practised by all that have been sincere. So *Paul* when he was canvasing the case with his own soul, and disputing with himself whether

all

all was well with him or not, *Rom.* 7. in this took comfort, *as to my inward man, I delight in the Law of God.* I do not only do it, but I delight to do it. To do what God commands, and to do it as our burthen, is unsuitable to this Doctrine, *Rom.* 7. 21, 22. *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.* It is natural for men to delight in nothig but sin, and to take pleasure in unrighteousnes: *They are lovers of pleasure* (saith the Apostle) *more than lovers of God*: and he tells us, *Rom.* 1. *last* of some kind of Monsters among men, *who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* this is given as the true account of Gods severity against them: every part of our duty is our priviledge, God hath required nothing from us as our duty, but it is as much to our present comfort, as our future happines; it is only carnal reason that makes objections against the Commands of God; it is the Language of corrupt nature, *When will the Sabbath be over?* Amos 8 5. but the language of a gratious heart is, When will there be a return of Sabbath opportunities, and of means for us to enjoy Communion with God? Natural men cannot be so sick of spiritual imployments, as gratious souls are sick of worldly diversions, *Rom.* 8. 15. *He hath not given us the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry abba Father.* When we are able to look up to God as a Father, we cannot long endure his absence. *Absolom* was sorely afflicted for his two years absence from *David*

at

at *Jerusalem*, and that he might see his Father. But what ever langauge corrupt nature may speak, the great design of this Doctrine of God our Saviour (wherever it works effectually) where ever it comes in power) is to refine our affections and to purge out this dross and to turn the whole bent of our hearts towards God, *Psal.* 63. 1. *My Soul longeth for thee*: and what we long for (while that is absent) makes us take no pleasure in what we enjoy; *A day in thy presence is better than a thousand else where. Psal.* 84. 10. *I had rather* (said *David*) *be a door-keeper in the House of God, than dwell in the Tents of wickedness, in the meanest rank of Servants.* And said the Prodigal, though I be but as a hired Servant, yet if am but one of thy Family I am well enough, it is more than I deserve. *It is good for me to draw nigh to God*: he speaks of it as on experienced truth, and that he sought for, and took pleasure in; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, &c. Psal.* 27. 4.

Now not only to engage in the duties of of Religion, but to account them our delight, our chiefest refreshment, and to be of nothing so impatient as the want of those Opportunities, is that which this Doctrine of God our Saviour teacheth us, *viz.* to delight our selves in God.

4. To devolve all our care upon God; *Casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you.* Though yo may meet with losses and troubles that may come upon you as thick as *Jobs* troubles came upon him, even as the Waves of the Sea,

Sea, one upon the neck of the other, yet to be quiet and calm.

5. This Doctrine teacheth us to devote our whole selves to him without any reservation, and this commanded, and practised: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy might, with all thy strength, and with all thy Soul.* And we find this in the practice of Gods people, as to their endeavours: *Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, Praise his holy Name, Psal.* 103. 1. *With my whole heart have I sought thee, Psal.* 119. 10. This Doctrine directs all to give up their whole selves to God, and thus, *Psal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* &c. all was nothing in comparison of God.

6. To be satisfied with, and thankful for sincere Consciences, though we be guilty of many failings, and whatever we meet with in Gods service: though we have never so great oppositions, yet if we can but approve our hearts to be sincere to God; this was the comfort of all the holy men of God. Though *David* designed this, and desired to be instrumental in building the Lord a house, though he had not that honor allowed him, yet he rejoyced in this, *that God had put it into his heart,* 1 Chron. 29. 10, 11. *Then the people rejoyced for that they offered willingly. David the King rejoyced with great joy, wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the Congregation:* he accounted it an honor to be imployed in the work; but that he made it sincerely his aim was his comfort. So Saint *Paul*, though he found many infirmities in himself, yet because he was sincere, God did afford him eminent assistance,

I will glory in my infirmities, 2 Cor. 12. 9. because when *I am weak* in my self, *then am I strong* in Christ Jesus. So he speaks of it as the common support of all believers, *viz.* their sincerity, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *This is our rejoycing, the testimony of Consciences, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity we have had our conversations in the world*; though we have not been without our failings nor oppositions, yet this is that which comforts us against both, that God hath honoured us to be sincere; though we have met with many troubles, yet we have our rejoycings in the midst of our sorrows, and this is our comfort.

7. To moderate our affections to all things here below, so far as they are diversions from our converse with God. This Doctrine teacheth us the greatest magnanimity, the highest courage, the truest generosity, and nobleness of spirit that can possibly be found; that is a true great spirit which can contemn all the great things of this world. You read *Moses*, though he had the opportunity of being *Pharaohs* Successor in *Egypt*, *yet he refused to be called the Son of Pharaohs daughter*, Heb. 11. *chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God*, &c. *esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt*. This Doctrine acquaints us with such comforts, with such priviledges, with such refreshments as render all the most tempting objects in the world inconsiderable.

8. To carry it towards God with quietness and submission to his Providences. God loves a chearful giver, and doer, and sufferer, *Rom.* 5. 3. *and not only so, but we glory in tribulation also*;

this is a high pitch: *they ſuffered joyfully the ſpoyling of their goods*, Heb. 10. 34. This is a point, to loſe all, and yet to be chearful, and yet to rejoyce: Now what ever troubles we may meet with, this Doctrine pacifies and quiets us, and makes us chearful in the midſt of thoſe troubles; it tells us that no troubles befall us but what come from God. *Afflictions ariſe not out of the ground, nor troubles out of the duſt, but God lifts up and caſts down.* It teacheth us that God is wiſe, and knows what is beſt for us, and that it is much better for us to be in his carving than our own; and that that cannot be amiſs that is of Gods doing, who is both wiſe, and able, and faithful, and in all theſe *Infinite*. I remember a paſſage of one, who when he was threatned to be perſecuted, impriſoned, tormented, replied, *O bleſſed be God you have not the power of Heaven nor Hell, you cannot promiſe to bring me into the one, or to throw me into the other, theſe are beyond your power; but God deſerves to be truſted in, and relied upon.*

3. To approve our ſelves to God in ſparing no coſts nor pains in his ſervice. *David* did diſdain to ſerve God with that which coſt him nothing; ſo ſhould we though the ſervice of God be coſtly to us upon other accounts, to pray, and to hear, and to meditate, though it ſhould coſt us the ſweat of our Souls, though it ſhould coſt us pains and labour, ſo we do but diſcharge theſe duties aright, yet we ſhould think all well imployed, *Mal.* 1. 8. 14. *Curſed be the deceiver, who having a male in his flock offers to God a female, or a corrupt thing*: do you preſent that

that to God that you dare not present to an earthly Magistrate, cursed be that deceiver. *I am a great God (saith the Lord) of Hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen, and I will make it dreadful among you, if you carry it thus towards me.*

1. *P.* To injoyn a confinement of our zeal, activity and earnestness unto the service of God; it is good to be zealous, but in what? in this, in the service of God, and the concerns of his Name; it is good to be zealous in a good matter; zeal is an excellent affection, it is the heighth of our affection, but it must be well fixt, otherwise it is dangerous: you find how resolute the people of God have been of old and how zealous in the service of God, *Josh.* 24. 15. *But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.* Do you take your course, choose whom you will serve, whether the Idols of the Nations wherein you live, or whether you will serve the true God, but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. *Joshua* speaks first for himself, and then for his family; he uses this kinde of provocation as a prudential and pressing Argument, that would prevail with the people to renounce all their Idols, and to submit themselves cordially and heartily to the service of God. there is a moderation indeed that is allowable, yea, necessary, which is a duty; but moderation in the things of God, and an indifference therein, is a detestable luke-warmness; *because thou art neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth*: the service of God we are commanded to perform with our might and strength to

the

the utmoſt. *Not ſlothful in buſineſs, but fervent in Spirit ſerving the Lord.*

Laſtly, This Doctrine teacheth us in all theſe reſpects together to honour God, and thereby to adorn his Goſpel, in following its Rules fully and univerſally in keeping cloſe to his inſtitutions in all our courſes. The Religion this Doctrine teacheth admits of no mixtures: *It is pure Religion and undefiled,* Jam. 1.27. we muſt not vary from his inſtitutions in any thing we perform to him in the duties of his worſhip.

1. In reſpect of the Object; we muſt not joyn any thing with God *as the Object of worſhip,* this hath been the miſcarriage of the greateſt part of the world in former Ages; we muſt not joyn Idols with God; this was the ſin of the Jews, 1 *Kings* 18.21. *Elijah adjured the people, ſaying, if God be God, ſerve him; if Baal be God ſerve him: why halt you between God and Baal?* If theſe be the Inſtitutions of God follow them, if not follow others that are ſo.

Again, we muſt not joyn Saints nor Angels with God in his worſhip: this is the great miſcarriage of the Papiſts; it was foretold by the Apoſtle, *Col.* 18. we muſt not joyn any thing with God as the Object of our love, *Matth.* 6. 24. *No man can ſerve two Maſters* (be ſure not two Maſters whoſe Commands are ſo contrary each to other) *for he will love the one and hate the other.*

Again, we muſt not joyn our luſts with God, that is the worſt of all, *Matth.* 16.24. *Then ſaid Jeſus, if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf.* Matth. 29. 30. *If thy right*

eye

eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, and if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. Nothing less than the intireness of our whole man is due to God. So in the Rule of Gods worship there must be no mixture.

We must not joyn humane Traditions with Divine Institutions: this was the great miscarriage of the Scribes and Pharisees in their Doctrines, and of other Jews who followed their Doctrine. *In vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrine the Traditions of men,* Matth. 15. 19.

Again, we must not mingle our own fancies with Gods Institutions: this was the sin of *Nadab* and *Abihu,* Lev. 10. 1, 2. *they offered strange fire*: it was fire which was neither commanded nor forbidden, but because it was not commanded, therefore they drew the severity of God upon them. *fire came down from Heaven and destroyed them.* If you have not a Command from God for what you do in his worship, you can expect then no other answer from God, but that *Isa.* 1. 11, 12. *Who hath required these things at your hands.* Though you take never so much pains in serving God, if it be not the way of Gods appointment you can expect no acceptance of it.

Again, We must not joyn the modes and customes of the times and places in which we live, with the Ordinances and Appointments of God, *Lev.* 18. 3, 5. this charge is given by God in his express Command, *ver.* 3. *After the doings of the Land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt, ye shall*

do. Vers. 5. *But ye shall keep my statutes, and my judgments, which if a man do he shall live in them: I am the Lord.* God looks upon it as a disowning of his Sovereignty, and a refusing to be subject to him. *I am the Lord*, none but me; not customes, not fancies, not inventions, but if you have any sense of Religion upon your hearts keep close to my Institutions.

2. There must be no mixture in respect of our aims: the sum of all Religion is to glorifie God; to glorifie God must be our design: now we must not mingle in our aims other things with the Glory of God, not the applause of men; you may find many that pretend highly to the Glory of God, but all the service that they perform to God is, that they may be seen of men; this was the great sin of the Scribes and Pharisees, *Matth.* 6. 15, 16. *Take heed that you do not your alms before men to be seen of them*: all these they did, but it was for applause in the world; they loved to greet in the Market-place, and to wear Phylacteries broad, wherein the Law of God was written: these were specious pretences, but there was a fly in the box of Oyntment.

Again, We must not mingle our present safety with Gods Glory. Many will engage in the service of God so far as King *Henry* the IV. who said, he was willing to venture so far to sea and no farther than he could return safe to land again: many will venture for God, but no farther than they can secure the main. Now this Doctrine teacheth us, that the only way to save our lives is to lose them; he that walks up-

ightly walks safely: it propounds higher ... of safety than the world can. Can any pro... so well for our safety as God will? and G... hath undertaken to keep them safe that do the... duty. You have nothing else to look after. ... our hearts could follow God thus, with this fi... fast constancy, and resolution, how much ... should we adorn this Doctrine of God our Sa... viour?

This is the first branch how it is our duty, and ... how it is the great expectation of God from ... those that enjoy the Gospel, to adorn it in our ... carriage towards God.

The second head how we should adorn this ... Doctrine of God our Saviour, is, by conformity ... to the Rules of this Doctrine in our carriage to... wards others. This Doctrine is a compleat Rule, ... able to make a man of God perfect throughly furnished to every good work. We want no ... additional Rules, no other Doctrines, but only ... such as are by way of explication of this. There... fore in our carriage towards men here I shall ... treat more particularly.

First, In our carriage to all men in general.

Secondly, In our carriage to Enemies, and to Friends.

1. In our carriage to all men in general: ... carry it with meekness, and gentleness, to give ... no offence either to the Jew, or Gentile, or ... to the Church of God, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. *A meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*: in *v.* 3. *Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing*

of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart: in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. This is the ornament which St. *Peter* commends to Women: Women indeed may have many provocations to anger, but this is the Apparel they should put on, a meek and quiet Spirit. There is no such Tyranny in the world, as in private Families, as in the husbands carriage towards their wives, (though this may be the occasion of the provocation, the women being of unquiet Spirits,) but this is good in the sight of God, to be of meek and quiet spirits: and so we ought to carry it in reference to all men. But more particularly, We adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour when we live in an exactness to those Rules that concern our carriage towards men, which I shall reduce to these five or six.

1. This Doctrine of God our Saviour though it teacheth us to bear the greatest of wrongs, yet doth not allow us to do the least wrong, 2 *Phil.* 2. 16. *That ye may be the children of God without rebuke.* But how shall we approve our selves to that *you may be blameless and harmless. Luke* 3. 10. We read of those hearers that came to *John the Baptist* to enquire what they should do, when they were wrought upon by his Ministry, and startled, and awakened, and brought to see their need of Christ; who received this answer, *vers.* 11, *And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two Coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath Meat let him do likewise.*

ver. 13. *To the Publicans, Exact no more than what is appointed you.* ver. 14. *And to Souldiers, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.* This Rule extends to all the several kinds of doing wrong; there are these three several ways by which we are lyable to injure others.

In their { Names, by Defamation.
Estates, by Fraude.
Persons, by acts of Violence.

All these the Doctrine of the Gospel forbids under the highest Penalties imaginable.

In their Names; And that we are subject to it either by spreading of evil reports, or entertaining evil reports slightly. This we should be careful of, to be tender of the good names of others; the great Rule the light of Nature teacheth, is to do to others as we would be willing they should do to us. You would not be willing to have your Names blasted, your Reputation defamed by others; then have the same care of them: but the Gospel advanceth its principles much higher.

Again, We may not injure others in their Estates, by defrauding them; *Let no man go beyond, or defraud his Brother in any matter, for the Lord is the avenger of such.* In our worldly commerce and earthly dealings with men this is too frequent Corruption, and it is to be wished that men would more diligently hearken to the Rules that this Doctrine prescribes.

And for the Persons of men, this Doctrine is a strong check and restraint to all Enormities that

that kind: yea, it reacheth so far as our very thoughts, as our Saviour explains it, *Matth.* 5. 22. That Law that forbids murder, forbids *malice*, and we are guilty of murder in a malicious thought; and how many sad denunciations of wrath are there against the person of him that is *angry with his brother without a cause*: and so for uncleanness as ver. 27. it forbids not only the outward act, but the inward thought: in all these respects this Doctrine is a bar to injuries; we must neither wrong others in their names, in their estates, in their person, nor in their souls.

2. This Doctrine doth not only restrain us from doing wrong to others, but it injoyns us to do all the good we are capable of doing to them, and that in these two respects.

1. In all expressions of kindness to their outward man.

2. In all expressions of kindness to their inward man.

1. In all expressions of kindness to their outward man; there is something due of mercy to brute beasts: *If thy enemies Ox, or Ass go astray, thou shalt surely bring it him back again*, Exod. 23. 4. much more to the person of thy Neighbour. This Doctrine doth teach us to be the best natured persons in all the world, not only not to dare to injure any in any of their concerns, but to do all the good we can for, and to them; and it is a reproach to this Doctrine, when those that profess it, do walk so unsuitably to it.

Again, it teacheth us to keep off all wrongs

from others. *Luke* 16. 37. *Jesus answered and said, Go, and do thou likewise.* This is the common nature, to minister to the necessities of all that are reduced to extremities.

2. As in respect of the outward man, so especially in respect of the inward man, this Doctrine teacheth us to be kind to Souls: it was a high price that Christ set upon Souls; for, their sakes he left Heaven and died upon the Cross; he did not come upon the earth to make his people rich, or great, to give them abundance of wordly comforts; it was not bodily but Soul mercies he came to bestow upon them: this is a common debt that we owe to all men as men, *Rom.* 1. 14. *I am a debtor both to the wise and to the Gentile*: to both, to do them all the good I can; but what good was this? not to teach them how to thrive in the world, to get estates but how to be happy for ever. There are these two debts upon all Professors of Christianity to the Souls of others.

1. There is a debt of instruction of such as are ignorant: Certainly, if God takes so much care, as to require us to shew mercy to the wandring Oxe, or Ass of our Neighbour: much more to the wandring soul of our neighbor: doth God take care of Oxen? we may apply it to this case, no it is written for man, it is spoken for our sakes, 1 *Cor.* 9. When St. *Peter* was so much shaken by the prevalencie of his temptation, that he had lost all the sense of the truth of Grace in his heart (saith our Saviour to him) *when thou art converted strengthen thy Brethren.* It seemed to be a new conversion of him, he had lost so much the sense of his first Conversion: shew thy

thy thankfulness to God (as if he had said) by shewing mercy to others Souls, because God hath shewed mercy to thy Soul.

2. A debt of reproof of those that are extraordinary. *Thou shalt not suffer sin to rest on thy Brother, but thou shalt in any wise reprove him*: it is spoken of those that partake of the same nature with our selves. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother*: mercy in this kind to him is cruelty, and flattery is the most remote from love. *James* 5. 20. *Let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the evil of his ways, shall save a Soul from death.* O do but think what blessings you might be, if you would but conform to this Rule: you may save many a Soul from death by seasonable and wise reproof: the meanest and most private Christian owes this duty to all the world. That is the second: this Doctrine teacheth us to bear wrongs, but to do none, and to do all the good we can, both to the Souls and Bodies of others.

3. If through weakness or wickedness we have done wrong to others, this Doctrine enjoyns us to make full reparation with an overplus for what wrong we have done. In the Levitical Law provision was made against doing wrong to others, by restitution; which we find repeated at large *Exod.* 22. and *Levit.* 6. nor was this only a Levitical Doctrine, but Evangelical. *Zacheus* crying out, *Lord, if I have wronged any man, I will restore four-fold*: there is this difference between the breach of the Commands of the first Table, and of the Second Table. The breach of the Commands of the first Table ad-

nots of no restitution, but what harh been
by Christ; it is impossible that we should
pensate for those wrongs that we have done
Divine Justice: But for the breach of the
mands of the Second Table, besides Re
tance, there must be restitution, because
is a double wrong done; a wrong against
in transgressing his Commands, who comma
us to carry it righteously, and with all inte
with those with whom we have to do: no
his Commands are transgressed, so our Ne
bours are injured; here is a double wrong
but that the Commands of the first Table (
have a precedencie) and though Repen
may prevail for a pardon so far as the fo
cerns God, and is a transgression of his L
yet there must be restitution also to testif
reality of our Repentance.

4. To rejoyce in the good of others, and
upon this account, because they are partak
partake of humane nature: it is very natu
for man to envy others good. *The Spirit*
dwells in us, lusteth to envy. Jam. 4. 5. n
good Spirit of God, but our natural spirits
corrupt Spirits; it was the sin of *Cain*, he
ied the acceptance of *Abels* Sacrifice: *God*
respect to Abel and his Sacrifice, but to Cain
not respect, and this filled *Cain* with envy,
that envy ended in murder: Nay, this is
distemper that is born with us, as St. *Aug*
observes, who seeing two little Infants at
breasts of their Mother, the one looks with
pale face upon the other, envying at what the
ther received; he drew this Observation fro

hence

how natural this sin of envy is, and how hardly it is cast off, the best men may be surprized with this sin. *Joshua*, a man eminent for holiness, every thing in him almost was commendable, yet we read of him, *Numb.* 11. *One ran and told Moses that Eldad and Medad did Prophesie in the Camp; and Joshua the son of Nun the servant of Moses, one of his young men answered and said, My Lord Moses forbid them*; speaking of their Prophesying. *Peter* envied *John* the beloved Disciple, that singular favour he had from Christ, *John* 21. *And Peter seeing him said to Jesus, Lord, what shall this man do?* it is natural for us when others are on the top of the world and we at the bottom to cast a wry look upon them; *the envie that dwelleth in man lusteth to envy*. Now the best Antidote we have against this ill frame and temper, is the Doctrine of God our Saviour, it teacheth us to rejoyce in the good that others enjoy, though we do not enjoy the same our selves: if God give others health and we do not enjoy it our selves, yet rejoyce in their health, blessing God for others Comforts though we our selves are under streights; and blessing God for others blessings though we do not partake of the same.

This Doctrine teacheth us to carry it towards all men humbly and tenderly in all their concerns; pride and passion are the great disturbancies of all humane Societie. St. *James* tells us, *James* 3. 13. *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom; but if you have bitter envying and strife*

strife in your hearts glory not, and lie not against the truth: this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisie. This Doctrine furnisheth us with Arguments to be humble, though our condition be never so high; and to carry it humbly and gently, and that with all meekness with those with whom we converse. ---- To be humble ---- 1. Because we have nothing of our own. *We have nothing that we have not received. Who made thee to differ from another?* To differ as to outward respects, in health, in abundance, what ever difference there is it is of Gods making. So as to difference in respect of parts and gifts, and graces, this is a humbling consideration, that we have nothing but what we have received.

2. We have received nothing but upon the account of free grace; we have nothing but what God gives, and we deserve nothing but what his goodness inclines him to bestow: all is the gift of God, and all that God gives; he hath no other motive to move him to bestow but only his own Goodness, there is no motive in us at all; we have despised his mercy, and rejected his kindness, we are unfit and unwilling to receive them, it is only free grace bestows them; we have nothing but what God gives, and we deserve nothing but what free Grace bestows.

3 All those favours that God vouchsafes to us are to humble us; whilst he lifts us up above others,

others, it is to lay us low in our own thoughts in our own esteem: the more we have received, the greater debtors we are to Divine Grace; it teacheth us that all our liftings up are of his mercy, and to keep our hearts low though we be in a high condition, in an humble frame under our great advantages; not despising our inferiors and not carrying it superciliously towards them that are our equals.

In a word, this Doctrine teacheth us to carry it so towards all men, as becomes them that are alike servants to one and the same Master. Observe, though there are different sorts of persons here upon earth, one is superior, and another is inferior and subordinate, yet God is superior to all; and therefore the Apostle frequently propounds this as the measure of our performing duties to our inferior Relations, and to our superior Relations too, to do it as unto God, *Col.* 4. 4. do it heartily, do it as to God; let us carry it humbly to all men; we are all servants to the same Master, let us be in what rank or condition soever. It is observed by a Learned Writer, that there is nothing makes a difference as to worldly greatness, but only man, sickness makes no difference, the grave makes no difference, the general Judgement makes no difference, God makes no difference, high and low are all levelled in these respects.

6. In our carriage towards men, this Doctrine is the greatest Antidote against all unpeaceable behaviour. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*: Peace so

far

far as it is consistent with holiness. *The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable*, &c. but that there may be a necessary vindication and defence of mens rights and properties, the Scripture doth not condemn that, but it meets with a peaceable frame and disposition of spirit, and with an unwilling willingness, when men are forced to that way, *Ephes.* 4. 1, 2, 3. *I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, and with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Follow peace with all men*; do all you can to preserve peace. *Eph.* 5. 2. *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us.* But consider what a lovely thing would this Doctrine of God our Saviour appear to be, were Professors but live up to these Rules, not to dare to do the least wrong to others, but to bear the greatest wrongs from others: to look upon themselves as obliged to do all the good we can to others, to the souls, to the bodies, to the concerns of others, &c. what security can men have for all that is in danger by men, more than they have by these Principles? and what greater assurance can they have of all the good men are capable of doing them, which these Principles oblige those that own this Doctrine to put in practice? Certainly it is only the want of living up to these Rules that brings this Doctrine under such contempt and reproach.

Now as I have spoken of our adorning this Doctrine by our carriage in reference to God and

and to all men in general; so I should now come in the

3. How we must adorn this Doctrine by our carriage to our enemies.

1. What ever injuries we meet with from enemies, this Doctrine teacheth us not to be our own avengers. How many unjust injuries did *David* suffer from *Saul*; and how often did God deliver *Saul* into his hands, in so much that his followers said, *the Lord hath delivered his life into thy hand*; Now he is in thy power: O says *David*, 1 Sam. 24, 12. *The Lord Judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee, but my hand shall not be upon thee.* ver. 11. *Moreover my Father, see, yea see, the skirt of thy robe in my hand*, &c. how often had *David* the like opportunity to destroy *Saul*, but no saith he, *God will avenge me, he will either fall in battle, or however the hand of God will come upon him for his unrighteous dealings with me.* So it is said of our Saviour, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; who when he suffer'd he threatn'd not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; he committed all to God. This is that that we are taught by this Doctrine to commit all to God, and not to avenge our selves.

2. To be so far from being overcome with evil, as to overcome evil with good. *To pray for them that persecute us, and despitefully use us*: to be instruments of all the kindness we can to their Souls, who are instruments of all cruelties to our bodies. This was our Saviours temper,

Luke

Luke 23. 34. *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*: he pitied them and prayed for them, even then when they were acting the cruelty they could againſt him; and he has *left us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps*. 1 Pet 2. 21. Rom. 12. 19, 20, 21. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord*; *therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him*; *if he be thirſty, give him drink, for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head*: *be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*: This would be a noble Principle for you.

3. Be ready to forgive them: it is an high expreſſion of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 32. *Forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſts ſake hath forgiven you.* O! how much hath God forgiven you, how many and how great were thoſe ſins that you have run into with Divine Juſtice, hath God forgiven you for Chriſts ſake? think of that expreſſion when you find any thing of revenge ſtirring in your hearts. This is the Rule our Saviour preſcribes, that when ever we pray for pardon for our ſelves, we ſhould pray for it with a willingneſs to pardon others: *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.* They who expect forgiveneſs from God, and are not willing to forgive others, are never like to prevail in their requeſts: O what high engagements does this Doctrine lay upon us, and how lovely would this Doctrine appear to the world, if theſe Rules were but ſtrictly obſerved.

4. To

To love our enemies. This is a hard Doctrine: Nature teacheth us to love our Friends, but this goes higher, it teacheth us to love our Enemies. Herein we are required to shew our selves to be children of our Heavenly Father, *Mat.* 5. *If you love them that love you, what reward have you? do not even the Publicans the same?* verſ. 44. *But I say unto you, love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that diſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you: that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.* The Publicans were looked upon as the vileſt ſort of ſinners; yet theſe men came up to this good nature: but this Doctrine teacheth us to love our Enemies, and to do all the good we can to them, that labour to do all the evil they can to us. Indeed in ſome caſes our Saviour gives a diſpenſation; we muſt not caſt Pearls before Swine, leſt they trample them under their feet; ſo not to throw theſe reproofs to them that will turn again and rend them.

In a word, this Doctrine preſcribes to us, to do all we can to win our Enemies over to a liking of what they oppoſe: and thus as to our Enemies, as well as our Friends, we ſhould do what we can to commend the ways and ſervices of God to them, and to bring them into a love of them, 1 *Pet.* 2. 15. *For ſo is the will of God, that with well doing, you may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.* You ſhould by well doings, ſilence them that they may not be able to ſpeak againſt your perſons, or profeſſions, or Principles; ſuch a carriage would be hugely to the advantage of the Goſpel.

3. A third head is this; Our carriage to our Brethren, and fellow Christians should be such as to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour: and in respect of our carriage towards them, take this in general: Whatever friendly Office, whatever expression of tenderness, and care we are to shew to men in general, and to Enemies, we are under a stricter obligation to shew the same to our fellow Christians, though we are commanded *to do good to all men*, Gal. 6. 10. *yet especially we are commanded to do good to the houshold of Faith.* The whole duty of man is summed up by our Saviour in this one word *Love.* When the Lawyer came to Christ tempting him, *Mat.* 22. *Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law?* vers. 36, 37. he answered, *and said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy Neighbour as thy self.* On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets: our Saviour makes this duty of Love an universal duty. Some of the Philosophers thought Love was an universal affection and all the other affections but a diversification of Love; Love branched out in different ways, and there is some reason in this. The reason why we hate any thing is because it opposes what we love, and the reason why we grieve for any thing is, because it stands between us and what our love is set upon: so I might speak of all the other affections. But to be sure this will hold in Love, to be a debt that we owe both to God and Man. This is the sum of all the debt we owe, and this debt, though we are still paying it, yet we are still owing it, especially

houſhold of Faith, our fellow Chriſtians 1 *John* 3. 22, 23. compared with *ver.* 22. *And whatſoever we aſk we receive of him, becauſe we keep his Commandment*: Obſerve the Commandments are there mentioned in the plural number; as many as do theſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight: in *ver.* 23. *And this is his Commandment* (it is mentioned in the ſingular Number) *that we ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another as he gave us Commandment. A new Commandment* (ſaith our Saviour) *I leave with you, that ye love one another.* [*New*:] Was it not old? Yes: But it is ſaid to be new upon a double account.

1. Becauſe it is preſt upon us by new Motives and arguments.

2. And it is commended to us by a new pattern and example, ſuch an example of love as the world never had before, nor can ever have again. Now the firſt and principal Object of our love is God himſelf, in whom is every thing that might attract our love; the next aud ſecondary Objects of our love are all thoſe Creatures (which according to their degree) do participate of Divine excellencies: in this reſpect the Saints are ſtiled, *The excellent in the earth*, as *David* declares them to be, *them in whom is all my delight*; and therefore are excellent, becauſe they partake of, and are neerer in their reſemblance to the Divine nature than others, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promiſes, whereby we are made partakers of the Divine nature*; a high expreſſion: This is clear, this debt of love (though we owe it to all, and

ſhall be owing it while we live) yet we owe it eſpecially to our fellow Chriſtians, and that upon theſe accounts.

1. Becauſe the Glory of God and the honour and credit of Religion is more concerned in their well doing; they are nearer to God than others are.

2. Becauſe Chriſt takes all good offices that are done to them as done to himſelf; a full place to this purpoſe is that *Matth.* 25. 40. when Chriſt ſhall ſpeak encouragingly to them on his right hand, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit a Kingdom prepared for you*, &c. *in as much as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

3. It is a ſpecial evidence of our ſincerity, our love to the Brethren, *Hereby we know that we are paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the Brethren*, 1 Joh. 3. 17.

4. It is upon this account principally that God intruſts ſome of his ſervants with greater talents than others, that they may be more capable of expreſſing their love and tenderneſs to their Brethren, 1 *Cor.* 12. The Apoſtle compares the Church of Chriſt to an organical body, a body that conſiſts of many members; and he ſpeaks of a diverſity of gifts, that thoſe members are endued with, *v.* 4, 5, 6. but upon what account are theſe gifts given, *v.* 7. *It is given to every man to profit withal*, to be uſeful with; not merely to enrich them, but to be imployed by them; there are ſome to whom God gives a larger talent of riches and worldly comforts; and to others of parts, and abilities, gifts, and grace,

but

but all is to profit withal: therefore as one observes, there are Christians of divers ranks, and divers forms; some that are weak, but God hath inricht others with more strength; some are strong in grace and gifts, God gives those talents to them, that they may by converse help them that are weak, and have not their measure of strength and Grace, that all may be helpful one to another: those that have less than others, should provoke them that have more to thankfulness, and to have their bowels drawn out towards others that have need of their help. Consider the many strict obligations and bonds that Christians are in one to another beyond what other Relations have, at least how much more significant those Relations are between them; they are servants to one and the same Master, to wit, the Lord; *We have one Lord*, 1 Cor. 12. they are of the same family and household; hay, that is not all (though this obligeth us to a special degree of love) but they are Children to one Father, *born from above, not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God*, John 1.14. yet higher, *they are members of one body*, Col. 3.15. now there is a tenderness that all the members have one of another; *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body, and be thankful.* This notion is improved to the full, 1 *Cor.* 12. 25, 26. *That there should be no Schisme in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another.* But you have a higher expression than this, not only members of the same body, but members one of another: *ver.* 27.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular; or, as it is in the Greek, *members* of members of each member, as *Eckius in loc.* members of every part, members one of another: this shews the unity, oneness, and nearness that should be between the Children of God. Nay, they are said to be acted by the same Spirit; as the same Soul in the body acts the several parts of the body, but with a great diversity in respect of the divers parts of it, because of the diversity of the organs: in one part the eye, in that the Soul sees; in the ear it hears; in the hand it works, it acts in every part but according to its different constitution. So is the Spirit of God in this body the Church, it acts all in common; how strange would it be if the several members in one body should be at variance and difference one with another; that the hand not be helpful to the foot, or the foot not helpful to the hand; or shall the hand be employed to pluck out the eye, or to cut off the leg: this would be monstrous and strange to see: dissensions among persons so nearly related is looked upon as a great failing in many good men who were united in the same faith, who were imployed in the same work, and carrying on the same designe, (*Gods honour*) and service in the world; yet that they have shewed so much weakness, that they have had so many differences which nothing could reconcile but the common sufferings of both, and that from those who were enemies against both. It is observed in the Book of Martyrs, that when Bishop *Cranmer*, *Hooker*, *Ridley* and *Sanders* were in prison

they

they did agree, they then laid aside all differences between them. You see upon these accounts it doth very much concern us to exercise this duty of love, especially to our fellow Christians. *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us*, Eph. 5. 2.

Q. *But wherein should we express our love to our Brethren, so as thereby to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour?*

A. 1. In watching over them, to do what we can by way of prevention of what ever may be to their prejudice, or the dishonour of Religion, or the wounding of their profession; all the former instances of the near relation that Christians stand in one to another, implies a strong obligation upon all Christians to this duty. Indeed God gives a special charge to them that have the oversight of the flock, that they especially watch over them, *Heb.* 13. 17. *Submit your selves to them that have the rule over you, for they watch for your Souls*: Submit to them, be counselled, be guided by them in what they desire according to the Rule of Gods word. *Act.* 20. 28. St. *Paul* gives it in charge to the Elders at *Miletum*, *That they take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them Overseers*: this duty proportionably is enjoyned upon every Christian in his place. It was a profane speech of *Cain* concerning *Abel*, *Am I my Brothers keeper?* we should hinder the failings, and grieve for the offences of any, that profess the same Religion. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in suffering sin to lie upon him, but thou shalt in any wise reprove him*: So as to the defi-

ling of his Soul, so as to keep him from those punishments his sins deserve. The great concernedness of Christians now should be about the Souls of one another: this indeed is the truest love, the highest love, and comes nearest to the love of God and Christ.

2. In brotherly forbearance: the best Saints we can converse with here upon the earth are but men, men cloathed with the same infirmities with our selves; *Elias* was a man that mightily prevailed with God by prayer, *Jam.* 5. and yet it is said of him, he was a man of like passions. *Paul* and *Barnabas* (those eminent Apostles, whom the Heathen seeing to do such strange things would have worshipped and adored) say of themselves, *We are men of like passions with your selves*: the best of men have something in them to witness they are but men, and as we stand in need of forbearance from others our selves, so we are obliged on the highest account to bear with others, *Eph.* 4. 2. *With all lowliness, and meekness, and long suffering, forbearing one another in love, and so forgiving one another.*

3 In restoring our weak Brother with a Spirit of meekness, *Gal.* 6. 1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness*; the word in the Greek is καταρτίζετε, to set in joynt again, as a member that is unset, we must do what we can to set it again in its right place, that it may be useful and active: so must we do to our fellow members in Christ.

4 By a tender sympathy with them in their misery

miseries, and in bearing their burdens, accounting their afflictions our own; and this you have expresly commanded, *Gal.* 6. 2. *Bear one anothers burdens in love.* It was the sin of *Ephraim*, that he forgot the Afflictions of *Joseph.* But it is the great design of this Doctrine to perswade all Christians to a publick spiritedness: natural men may be pleasant, and think that it is all well with them because their own concerns are safe; but how was *Eli* concerned in the cause of God, and *David* in the concerns of *Jerusalem*, *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning*: This sympathy must be an active sympathy, administring to all the necessities of the Saints in all kinds, according to those talents God hath given to us, to administer to the outward wants of others, if God hath given us of the good things of this world, 1 *John* 3. 17. *Whoso hath this worlds goods and seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

5. In provoking one another to love and good works, *Heb.* 10.24 *Consider one another to provoke unto love and good works*: the word in the original (παροξυσμον) is generally taken in a bad sense, but here in a good, to wit, to excite, to stir up others to love and good works, and in our places to blow up those sparks of Graces that are in their Souls (what we can) into a flame; consider one another, use all the wayes you can to put an edge upon others Affections to the things of God: Do what you can by your counsels and examples to provoke one an-

other to love and good works, this is the only provocation that should be found amongst Christians, to labour by an holy emulation to excel in edification. In one word, we are commanded in our carriage towards towards our Brethren, to put on like bowels of compassion towards them, that Christ hath to us, *Col.* 3. 12. *Put you on therefore, Beloved, as to the elect of God (holy and beloved) bowels of mercies*, &c. And thus I have briefly gone over and shewed you how Christians should shew their thankfulness for the Gospel, by labouring thus to adorn it in their carriage towards their Brethren, to carry it with so much love, especially with love to their Souls.

Now in the last place to shew you how we should adorn the Gospel in our exact conformity to those Rules that respect our carriage towards our selves: for though there is no express Command in all the Scripture that we should love our selves, yet there is no Command but implies it. For all the Commands of of the Second Table are built upon this, a love to our selves: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self*: All the Commandments of the Second Table are built upon this foundation; this is to be the measure of our love to others, *Matth.* 22. 17. It is a principle that is rooted in the nature of all Creatures, self-preservation, to be tender of any thing that is hurtful or prejudicial to that: This is above all Commands, the ground upon which all others are built; Therefore how should we express our love to our selves? I shall shew that in these 5 or 6 particulars.

4. In denying our ſelves, *Matth.* 16. 24. *He that will be my Diſciple, let him deny himſelf*: he muſt have ſo much love to God, as to hate whatſoever is contrary to God.

Deny himſelf: How?

His ſinful ſelf, that is his luſts and his vile affections by mortification: *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth*, Col. 3. 5. his ſinful ſelf he muſt deny abſolutely, and univerſally, and everlaſtingly in point of endeavour: *Put ye off the old man, which is corrupt with his deeds: Crucifie the fleſh with the affections and luſts thereof*: to ſhew mercy to theſe ſinful affections, is to be cruel to our own Souls.

Again, our natural ſelves that is our Creature-comforts and enjoyments, we muſt deny our ſelves in theſe by a holy moderation at all times, and in having our affections looſe to them, to take heed ſo to love as not to over-love Creature-enjoyments, and relations, and ſo to ſeek theſe things as not to over-ſeek them, but to exerciſe holy ſobriety and moderation, as the Apoſtle exhorts, *Epheſ.* 4. And in ſome caſes we muſt deny our ſelves as to natural comforts when they prove to be an hinderance between our enjoying of them, and keeping cloſe to God, as in times of perſecution; it always falls out ſo, that we muſt either part with God, or Creature comforts, according as the degree of perſecution is; now we are commanded to deny our ſelves conditionally as to theſe things, that is, when God calls for theſe things at our hands, we muſt honour him with parting with liberty,

liberty, and life, and all that is dear to us, submitting our wills to his will what ever it is, saying the will of the Lord be done.

Then our Religious ſelves we muſt deny; that ſelf that is in our duties, in our graces, not putting our truſt or confidence in them: as St. *Paul* ſhewed his ſelf-denyal, *Phil.* 3. 9. *I deſire to be found in mine own righteouſneſs*: St. *Paul* was no ſmall proficient in the School of Chriſt, he was a man of high attainments, but he renounced all in point of truſt and confidence in them; he durſt not venture his hopes upon ſuch a ſandy foundation, he deſired not to be found in himſelf, but in the Righteouſneſs of God by Faith. As to our religious ſelves, it is true, we ſhould be as active in the exciting of our Graces, and in the exerciſe of them in every duty, as if the very acceptance with God did depend upon them, as if theſe were the foundation of all our hopes, evidences; but we ſhould look upon all as nothing, as to the putting any confidence in them; as if we had done nothing at all: we are but unprofitable ſervants when we have done what is our duty, and we can deſerve nothing at the hands of God. But obſerve as to our beſt ſelves, that is, our Souls, in point of care for them, there is no ſelf-denyal of this nature required; that is the Devils, ſelf-denyal.

2. With ſelf Diſtruſt, and ſelf Jealouſie. This is the way to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour. We are very apt to be ſuſpicious of the ſafety of thoſe we moſt love, and diſtruſtful of every thing that may hazard them, and to be much concerned about them. St. *Paul* ſpeaks

thus

this out of his tenderneſs to the *Corinthians*, and his concernedneſs for their welfare, *I am jealous over you*, 2 Cor. 11. 2. *with a Godly jealouſie*. So ſhould we be jealous of our own ſouls, and be keeping up a continual correſpondence with our ſelves, and not be ſtrangers at home: ſometimes counſelling and charging our ſouls with thoſe duties we are moſt prone to neglect. You find *David* often in diſtruſting himſelf, and therefore he checks himſelf for, and cautions himſelf againſt every thing that he diſcovers of a ſinful carriage; and ſo ſhould we, thoſe temptations we are moſt likely to be endangered by, either from our diſpoſitions, or particular vocations or callings, or conditions we ſhould be cautioning our ſelves againſt. This is that holy jealouſie that we ſhould exerciſe over our ſelves. Now this will be an honour to Religion when we are careful to live up to our profeſſion, and are careful leſt our lives ſhould ſwerve from that ſtrait Rule that God hath ſet before us; and ſo to be encouraging our ſelves in thoſe duties of which we have been convinc'd, and in which we have taſted any refreſhment, thoſe duties eſpecially that are of greateſt weight and importance. We ſhould be exceeding jealous of our own ſluggiſhneſs, leſt our own warm affections ſhould degenerate into chilneſs and our forwardneſs in Religion ſhould degenerate into formality. Thus you find *David* did, *Pſal.* 62. 1, 5, 6. The great duty he is here exciting himſelf to and encouraging himſelf in, is the exerciſe of his Faith in all conditions, *My ſoul truſt thou in God*: *My ſoul, I charge thee to make it thy buſineſs*

to

trust in God more firmly. So what he speaks to himself, he speaks to others, *vers.* 8. *Trust in him at all times ye people.* Such excitations every gracious Soul should be much exercised in; they should be jealous and distrustful of themselves, and press that home upon themselves which St. *Paul* urgeth upon the *Philippians*, Philip. 4. 8. *Finally Brethren, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, true, of good report, think on these things.* Have your thoughts again and again upon them, think of the loveliness of them, commend them in the first place from your own practice, and then labour to engage others in the like.

3. Self watchfulness, and frequent self reflections. To consider how it is with us, & to ponder all our ways. This is that wch the *Pythagoreans* were notable for, out of a principle of self jealousie: where have I been to day? what have I done to day? what good have I omitted? what evil have I committed? these kind of questions they did use to put to themselves every night before they went to sleep. Now this self watchfulness should express it self partly in keeping our hearts above all keepings, with all diligence, knowing how deceitful they are, *Prov.* 23. 4. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* Keep them as a man would keep his Treasure, or as Soldiers a Garison from the assaults of all kind of Enemies, keep them as under lock and key, keep them as that thou knowest them to be apt continually to start aside. It was the Lamentation of the Church *Cant.* 1. 6. *My Mothers Children are angry with me, they made me the keeper of the Vineyards, but*

my

my own Vineyard have I not kept. The Vineyard there meant was her own Soul, but my own Vineyard have I not kept. O keep your own hearts, this is the great deposition that God hath committed to every mans keeping, especially his Soul: the great thing that God hath betrusted every man with. Though God hath betrusted our souls true with others in some degree, yet every man especially hath the charge of his own Soul, *Luke* 12. 22 *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thy hands.* It may be required at others hands, that neglect their duty, in warning and counselling thee, according to their places, but it shall be required especially at thy hands: therefore our carriage towards our selves should be in this watchfulness in having a care of our selves, as apprehending evils and dangers continually incompassing us; our whole life is continually subject to temptations, and when our temptations from Lusts and Corruptions within are many, and when our hearts are like tinder, we had need then be watchful, both in doing what we can to keep our selves, and also commit our selves to Gods keeping.

2. Self severity, and chiding our selves for all our neglects of God, that ever we should be such unworthy Creatures to requite God as we have done. How often doth *Moses* upbraid the People of *Israel*, *O foolish people and unwise, do you thus requite the Lord?* Thus should we deal with our selves, charging our selves with disingenuity and ingratitude to that God who so highly deserves from every one of us; *So foolish was I and ignorant* (said *David*) *I was as a*

bruit

brute beast, and St. *Paul*, *I was a persecutor, and blasphemer, and injurious.* This, and that, though God had forgiven them their sins, yet they would not forgive themselves, nor forget their offences against God.

5. We should walk humbly with God. *Micah* 6. 8. you have there a short abridgment of mans duty when the Hypocrite was so large in his proffers (as thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oyle) no saith God, *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* This is a great and comprehensive duty to walk in a sense of our own weakness, and in a dependance on God; to look to him for direction to duty, and for strength in duty, that we may not be mistaken for want of direction, nor miscarry for want of assistances.

6. *Lastly*, We must keep our selves in the love of God. This is the great Rule which St. *Jude* propounds, Epist. *Jude* 21. *vers. Keep your selves in the love of God.* If you would do any thing in Religion to purpose, if either you would persevere with constancy or make any considerable progress in adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour, you must keep your selves in the love of God.

Applic. 1. By way of Reproof; if it be so that the great acknowledgment that God expects for this eminent Mercy (the Gospel) is that they should adorn it. Then this reproves all that sort of Professors, that are a disgrace and reproach to this Doctrine; they profess it, but

they

they reproach it by their vicious carriages. Consider how many there be that go under the name of Christians, but yet are a dishonour to Christianity. *Salvian* in his Book *de Ecclesia*, often brings in the Heathen reproaching the Christians for their unsutable conversation to their Profession, thereby giving occasion to the Heathen to blaspheme. Says he, *Holy things would certainly be done by holy Persons did their Teachers instruct them aright, and you may judge of him that is worshipped by them that do worship him: How can he be a good Master whose Disciples are so bad?*

It is observed at this day, that the Idolatrous practice of the Papists in worshipping Images and Statues, is a great stumbling block to the Jews, and the chief impediment of their Conversion to Christianity: the Jews of old time were very much addicted to the sin of Idolatry, but it is observed that after once they went into Captivity and were sensible that it was for that sin, that God had so long cast them off, they were a most averse people to the sin of Idolatry ever since. I might mention many Jewish Writers that mention this as the great stumbling-block to their Conversion: and so here, how many that are strangers to Jesus Christ are kept off from embracing this Doctrine of Christ from the intemperance and immorality of them that profess this Doctrine. Christians who have but a dimmer light have scorned to do those things that many Professors have been guilty of in the face of the Sun, this is a reproach to this Doctrine of God our Saviour.

There

There are five sorts of persons that I shall briefly speak of by way of reproof.

1. Those worldly Professors who lay about them for these earthly things, as if they believed nothing at all of what they profess, concerning God, Heaven, and their Souls, as if they expected no other happiness but what brute Beasts and Swine are capable of, as if they were acted by an Epicurean spirit, as if they minded what is present, and totally slighted what is future. *Come* (say they) *let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die*: What a great reproach is this to the Doctrine of God our Saviour, especially those that are moral amongst the Heathen; this teacheth us that our Souls are our truest good: but how many are there that live in a contradiction to this truth: their chiefest endeavour is to gratifie their senses, to make provision for that part of theirs that is common with them to brute beasts, I mean their bodies. This Doctrine teacheth us, that in ourselves we are miserable, and in Creatures our wants can never be relieved, and that our happiness consists alone in God, and that the light of his countenance is more than Corn, Wine, and Oyl, and all that this world can afford: that in God alone we have all; and if we have not an interest in him, we have nothing but emptiness in the midst of fulness, and poor in the midst of riches, and miserable in the midst of all our flourishing happiness in outward things: this Doctrine teacheth us, but worldly Professors cannot credit these truths; this Doctrine teacheth us to make Heaven our designe, and

Glory

Glory our aim, while *we look not at the things that are seen, but the things which are not seen:* to those things that are invisible to an eye of sense, and to live by faith; now these Professors that make the world their Idol, live in a perfect contradiction to all these great truths that this Doctrine propounds as the Rule by which we should walk through the whole course of our lives. God bids us make Heaven our designe, but worldly men make the world their designe: God bids us look after future happiness, and corrupt nature bids us mind our present ease and safety and advantages: this is the way in which all the people of God have reached Heaven in ages past, 2 *Cor.* 4. 2 *last verses.* So that this reproves all worldly Professors, who are a reproach to those Principles that teach us to live by faith: Now a worldly heart lives by sense, he cannot trust God farther than he can see him; if these outward confidences are secured, then all is wel with him, but if he be in worldly straits he can live no more by faith than what he hath in wordly supplies.

2. This reproves all slothful and sluggish Professors: indeed slothfulness is an unlovely thing in all persons; slothful persons are the very burdens of the earth that they tread upon: a Heathen called slothfulness, *The rust of the Soul:* but slothfulness in Christians of all persons is most culpable; to be slothful in the service of so good a Master, to be sluggish in so encouraging a work is most highly to be blamed in those that profess themselves Christians. You that have such a gracious Lord to serve, you that have all

the encouragements that Servants can have, *Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the Promises*, Heb. 6. 12. and Rom. 12. *Not slothful in business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.* If there be any warmth or heat of our hearts and affections, certainly it should be the things of God: Are other things desirable? how much more are these: Can other things be refreshing to us? how much more are these: and in such cases when all other things are useless: *Riches avail not in the day of wrath*: all worldly things are to no purpose; what is an estate to a pained body? to a man that is sick? he will give all he hath for health and ease; how many things are there that mony cannot purchase, that great estates cannot procure, much more in the matters of our Souls; and therefore those things that can only minister comfort to us in our greatest straits deserve our highest diligence; therefore they that are slothful Professors that are sluggish in the service of God, are a reproach to that good Master that they serve, to that blessed work in which they are engaged: God would not admit the Ass to be offered up in sacrifice to him under the Law, because that Creature was an embleme of a slothful and sluggish Professor, who are of all Professors the greatest reproach to their profession.

3. This may reprove all luke-warm Professors, what a reproach are these to Religion: do but consider how zealous many are in undoing their Souls; how much more pains do they take to go to Hell, to please their Master the

De-

will, to undo their own Souls, than those that profess themselves to be engaged in a better work, in saving their Souls; What a reproach is this to the Gospel? it casts a great contempt upon the profession it self, and upon all the Principles that are owned by such.

4. This may reprove all proud and conceited Professors: the great designe of this Doctrine of God our Saviour is to abase man, and to exalt God; to lay man low, and to set God on high. Now they that think that they can do well enough by their own strength, and can perform duties acceptable to God without more than an ordinary assistance, are to be reproved; pride was the first sin that brought in all other sins, and it is a costly sin, it is that that hath undone us, and we have cause to lament it, till God shall compleat our deliverance from the relicts of it, though that will not be while we are in this world.

5. This may reprove all disheartened and disconsolate Professors, that move on uncomfortably in the ways of God. Observe it, God doth expect that all Professors of his Name should not only do his will, but also delight to do it; and not only to serve him, but serve him with chearfulness: How angry was God with his antient people, and severely threatens them upon this account, *Deut.* 28. 47, 48. *Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with gladness of heart in the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies in the want of all things.* God gives enough to answer all discouragements, and therefore he would have all

his to go on with all alacrity and chearfulness in his service. God loves a cheerful giver, and and he also loves a chearful doer, and a chearful sufferer. In what work should we not be chearful, if not in the service of so good a God?

Now the more to set home this upon all those persons whom these several reproofs reach, I desire you to consider these three things.

1. Consider how many sober Pagans and Heathens have come nearer to this Rule of God our Saviour then all such Professors do: What reverence they have had to their Idol-Gods, and how highly they were concerned to shew the heigth of their respect to them? What a Controversie was there at *Ephesus* among the chief Persons concerning a Statue to *Diana*? One said Marble was more eligible, because it was more lasting; another that Alabaster was more desirable, because it was more costly; they had that respect to those false Gods which they worshipped, that they would serve them with the best. What a reproach then is it to Professors, that they can be content to put off the true God with the worst? to offer to him the blind and the lame, to offer that to him which they dare not offer to their Governour, *Mal.* 1. 6. 8.

Again, how many sober Heathen have in justice and moral honesty gone beyond them that usurp the name of Christians. To be a Christian and dishoneſt? to be a Christian and intemperate? to be a Christian and to dare to give way to any kind of fraud, or any thing that is immoral? How much have Pagans forborn their

these practices; nay, they have born witness against these with abhorrencie: What admirable Rules have we in *Seneca* concerning the contempt of the World, shewing that that is the truest generous spirit that contemns the world; these are low things, and these things cannot make a man happy, these cannot be the perfection of man.

Again, with what evenness of spirit have they carried it in all conditions. Notable is that which *Lucian* reports concerning *Socrates*, the Tyrant threatned him that he should die; then, said he, I am content to die: said the Tyrant, thou shalt live; then said he, I am content to live. I will acquiesce in whatever thou inclinest to, I shall not be displeased with whatever you do. What an admirable even frame of spirit was this, that neither fears could daunt him, nor any thing discompose him? I could mention many notable instances of more than an ordinary courage, and undauntedness of Heathens, according to that dimm light of theirs; they valued neither estates nor liberty, nor life in the defence of those things they called virtue, *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. it is said of those Heathen, *That they having not a Law, are a Law to themselves.*

2. A second consideration, how much doth God expect from you, more than others? you that profess to serve a higher Master, to be engaged in greater and better work than others. Therefore our Saviour presseth it upon them to be practised, *Matth.* 5. *What do you more than others? If you love your friends, the Publicans do*

so; if you do good to them that do good to you, nature teacheth you to do so. But what in doe you exceed others? Not to goe beyond them, is to come exceeding short of our duty, *James* 2. 19. the Apostle speaking to some that rested in Orthodoxy in matters of Faith (indeed this is desirable, but not to be rested in) *thou believest there is one God, thou dost well*; this is good: but if thou rest here, the Devils go thus far, *they believe and they tremble*: it is dangerous to come short of them, who will yet certainly come short of Heaven. *Matth* 25. in the Parable of the Master who had distributed several Talents among his Servants, you find that he was accounted a faithful Servant whose improvements were answerable to his receipts: God hath done more for you than for the Heathen part of the world: I have shewed you what a great priviledge it is to enjoy this Doctrine of God our Saviour, he expects that you should proportionably adorn it, that you should shun the appearance of evil, and hate the Garments spotted with the flesh, that you should shun all temptations to sin.

3. Consider what a glory former Christians that have outdone all other kind of men besides, in observing the Rules of the Gospel, have been to this Doctrine of God our Saviour. O what Heroick Spirits were the Primitive Christians, who could rejoyce in tribulations, and suffer the spoyling of their goods with joy, and that could with chearfulness undergo any misery, when the case was clear indeed (when the case was doubtful, the case was different) then how they

they counted Godlineſs great gain, though it was loaded with reproaches, and loſſes, and all worldly inconveniencies, yet they accounted it the moſt profitable courſe that could be taken, and when they were deſtitute of all Creature-comforts, yet they could be content with this, and triumph in this, *the teſtimony of their own Conſciences.* When the world was enraged, and the ſpirits of men were imbittered, when earth and hell was againſt them, yet then to be able to approve their hearts to God, this was enough to bear up their ſpirits, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *This is our rejoycing, the teſtimony of Conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have had our converſations in the world.* And ſo much for the firſt Uſe.

2. *Uſe.* Is by way of Exhortation to perſwade all to make this their full work and buſineſs, our conſtant deſigne and aim. And oh! what bleſſings might we be to after-ages in ſetting upon this work to purpoſe. *Rev.* 13. 14. *Write henceforth, bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord; for they reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them*: it is ſaid the ſins of wicked men do follow them, and the good works of the righteous do follow them; the good they have done to others ſhall be ſpread before others in after generations, ſo that their good works may be augmenting and increaſing many years after they are in their Graves. And thus I find a Learned Writer interpreting both thoſe places, concerning wicked mens ſins following after them, when all the ſins (that they in their own perſons are guilty of) are accounted for, they

shall have other mens sins as an after-reckoning. For every man does many mischiefs in the world; for by bad example he may infuse those corrupt Principles into others which may outlive his Person, and flourish when his body is rotting in the grave: Be perswaded therefore to make it your great designe to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour: there is no man so mean, but he is in a capacity in his place to do it; and the Apostle propounds it here in the Text to the meanest rank of persons, to Servants, that they may do it. I shall only mention some few weighty Arguments to engage you in this work.

1. Consider your Principles are higher than others: What are the Principles of a Christian? I answer, Faith and Love: Faith that lifts us up above the things of sense, above what is present, what is visible to an eye of sense. The *Just*, are said, *to live by Faith*, Heb. 10. 28. Faith lifts us up above our lusts, above our selves, above the World: it is said of *Jehoshaphat*, that *his heart was lifted up in the ways of God*: it is Faith lifts up the Soul above all rubs and impediments: now every Christian professeth himself to be a Believer; where is your faith then, as our Saviour upbraided his Disciples, that you are so nonpluss with every difficulty, and stagger at every danger, and are interrupted in the ways of God upon every discouragement? Where is your Faith?

The other Principle of a Christian is that of love; *Keep your selves in the love of God*, saith the Apostle. Love sweetens every thing; we are

content

content to go through hardships, and to pass through difficulties, to hazard our selves in dangerous encounters, if it be for the sake of them we love, or if it be in the pursuit of what we love. Now these that are acted from a Principle of Faith in God, and love to Christ that feel the constraints of his love lying upon their hearts what manner of persons ought they to be that make such a high profession as this?

2. As your Principles are higher, so your pattern is better than others: they have not any of those Rules that you heard mentioned in the large explication of the Doctrine; but those Rules have been exemplified in the pattern of our Lord Jesus, in that blessed example that he hath given us. *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk as he walked*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 6. to make him his pattern, and to follow him in all things that are imitable: true, some things Christ did as God, in those things he is not imitable; and some things he did as God-man, as Mediator, in those things he can have no followers, none to imitate him. But some things he did as he was a holy person, now what his life was, such should ours be; what the life of Christ was, I shall only hint some few things.

1. The life of Christ was the most self-denying life that ever was: we read of the self-denial of *Abraham*, and we have two notable instances of it; He obeyed the Call of God, and left his own Country and friends, and kindred, and acquaintance he went he knew not whether, nor to whom, yet God calls, and he obeys. —— God again calls to *Abraham* to offer up his Son *Isaac*, a Child of so many prayers, and a Son of

of so many Promises, and he in whom all the Inhabitants of the earth were to be blessed, yet God requiring him to offer up that Son he dares not with-hold him. So we read of *Moses* his self-denial, *He refused to be called the Son of Pharaohs daughter* Now the self-denial of Christ was such as the best of men were never capable of. If you consider the matters wherein he denied himself; he denied himself of that glory of which no Creature was in a possibility of enjoying what was his Glory? he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he suffered all this Glory to be obscured and clouded, and was contented with it in order to the accomplishment of his Fathers designe of mercy to poor sinners; the glory he left was such as no Creature was capable of, and the misery he underwen was such as no Creature could subsist under.

Again, the life of Christ was a pure and spotless life; there was *no guile found in his mouth*, he was fair without spot, the Lamb of God without spot, he was a man not only free from sinful practices, but in whom there was nothing of a sinful Principle, and therefore nothing could disturb him; all the temptations of Satan, all the allurements of the world could not prevail with him: Satan (when he assaulted him,) found nothing in him to fasten his temptations upon; under the forest of his afflictions there was found nothing in him of impatience, but still he was as a sheep before the shearers, that was dumb and opened not his mouth; but when his Name was reproached, and his person contemned, and his Soul afflicted, when he was

under

under all those agonies and pains, he neither brake out against Instruments, nor against God, but patiently endured all.

Again, the most high and distinguishing favours that God his Father shewed to him as the Son of his love, and that Son of his *in whom his Soul alone delighted*, could not lift him up, as afflictions could not sink him, so neither could these transport him; as the one could not cast him down, so neither could the other lift him up. Alas! it is hard for us to be in a high condition, and to keep our hearts humble; but consider the great favour that God shewed him in his Baptisme, when the Angel descended in the shape of a Dove, and by that voyce from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*; yet how humbly and how evenly did he carry it under all varieties of occurrences that he met with here upon earth.

Again, the strongest temptations could not unsettle him; when Satan came with his large proffers, *All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*, he answered him, *Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worthe Lond thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* The greatest oppositions could not abate his diligence, or make him the more remiss; neither the opposition of enemies, nor the mistaken Counsels of friends (as *Peter, Master, spare thy self*) could take him off from his duty, his obedience was so full and compleat, that he left nothing unfulfilled of all that God commanded him, *John* 17. 4. *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.* I might shew the activeness and usefulness of the life of Christ,

Christ, and what a notable example we have in all respects of his burning zeal for Gods glory, and his melting compassions towards poor Souls, and his stooping to the meanest offices in order to his peoples good; and his preferring the doing of good to others, before his enjoying all the good of the world; thus you see as our Principles are higher, so our pattern is better.

3. Your engagements are stronger than all others are; other creatures are beholding to God for their beings, for he made them, and for their continuance in their beings, he keeps their breath in their nostrils; they are beholding to God for their daily bread and outward comforts; but the engagements of Christians are far greater than all these outward mercies, though these are great. Consider the great things that God hath done for them in spiritual things, in sanctifying their hearts with Grace; this is a blessing that makes every thing a blessing to us; to the pure all things are pure, if God hath once seasoned our hearts with Grace in sanctifying them, our Comforts are sanctified, at least in a great measure: for what is the sanctification of our comforts, but only an ability to discharge those duties that those comforts enjoyn us to, that is to be faithful in serving God with them. In sanctifying our hearts, our afflictions are sanctified: now what is the sanctifying of our afflictions but the improving of them to the good of our Souls, and the Glory of God: nay, in sanctifying our hearts all the Ordinances and Priviledges that we partake of are sanctified, we make a sanctified use of all. O what a great

mercy

mercy is this! such were some of you, saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 6. *But ye are sanctified.* You were in the lowest rank of sinners, but you are now in the highest form of Creatures; *you are sanctified by the Spirit of God.* It is the work of sanctification that makes the great difference between persevering and Apostate Angels, this is that that makes an everlasting difference between the Souls of some, and the Souls of others: some are born in sin, and live and die in sin, and perish for ever for their sins; all are born in sin indeed, but some are recovered out of the power of sin by the work of sanctification; now what a wonderfull mercy is this? so I might instance in the work of Conversion, & in the work of the Justification of our Persons, this is another Priviledge that God hath instated us in; and O how great a priviledge is this? *David* pronounceth him a blessed man, *whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* And then God adopts them to be his Sons; they who were enemies are made friends by Justification, but they that were strangers are made Sons by adoption, and have the priviledge of Sons, that is boldness of access to God as our Father.

Again, every sincere Professor is made an heir, not only a Son of God, but also on Heir of Heaven; and how great a Priviledge is this? What ever our Condition is in this World, yet all this will end in heaven, & glory, & happiness. Then is the unspeakable aggravation of the mystery of the most flourishing ungodly man in the world, whatever his condition is as to riches and

greatneſs, and all the grandure he is capable of, yet all this will end in Hell; but the ſincere Soul (though it lives under reproaches, contempts and ſcorns, and all things that are unlovely to fleſh and blood) ſhall have Heaven at laſt, for they are heirs of Heaven.

4. Your encouragements are greater, than the encouragements of others: it is a great word that the Apoſtle hath to all ſincere Profeſſors, in the 1 *Timoth.* 4. 8. *Godlineſs is profitable to all things, having the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*; it hath the promiſe of Earth and Heaven; How great an encouragement is this? we ſhall want nothing that is good for us, that God ſees convenient; we ſhall have no more of trouble and affliction than what God ſees convenient and needful for us; for a little time if need be ye are in heavineſs: we ſhall have no more loads nor weights upon us but what we ſhall have aſſiſtance from God to ſupport us under: God hath engaged that we ſhall meet with no more difficulties in his ſervice, but what he will carry us through. And then as to the other world all ſhall tend to their happineſs there. Now what an unſpeakable comfort is this? Alas! this life is a life of vanity at the beſt; nay, this life is many times mixt with vexation in the beſt: but to think of future Glory one would wonder there ſhould be any thing of remiſsneſs or ſlightneſs in the ſervice of God.

5. Gods expectations from you are higher than others: *To whom much is given of them much is required*: God hath done ſo much for

for

for you already, and hath promiſed ſo much to you hereafter, that he expects you ſhould live, not at the rate of other perſons, but above them, and to outſtrip them.

6. Your dangers are greater if you be not faithful: all they that enjoy the Goſpel and do not anſwer the engagements of the Goſpel, are ſo far from being better than others, that it is worſe with them than others. The wrath of God, ſaith the Apoſtle, *is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*, Rom. 1.18. To the Jew firſt, becauſe their light was clearer, and they had greater priviledges than others; and ſo thoſe Cities to whom the Goſpel came, *Wo to thee Corazin, wo thee Bethſaida*, &c. *Matth.* 11. 22. You have been lifted up to Heaven in reſpect of the means of ſalvation, but you ſhall be caſt down to Hell in reſpect of the puuiſhment, becauſe of your unfruitfulneſs and unthankfulneſs for theſe mercies; becauſe you have received the Grace of God in vain.

PSALM.

PSALM. 18. 46.

The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my Salvation be exalted.

IN the words we have that *full Contentment*, and that compleat satisfaction which *David* took *in God alone*. (*the Lord liveth*;) it is as much as if he had said, Though *Friends die*, and Creature helps be removed, and though all outward Comforts may wither and perish, yet still that which is enough for me, is this, (*The Lord liveth.*) *David* had in former times been stript at once of all his Comforts; it was the saddest condition that ever that holy man was in, which we find recorded, 1 *Sam* 30. 6. when *David* was not only banished from *Jerusalem*, and from amongst the people of God; but after he had taken shelter under *Achish* the *Philistine* Lords complain against him, so that he must no longer abide there neither; the only place that was left him was a little *Zoar* (*Ziklag*, I mean) and when he thinks to retire thither, the *Amalekites* were come and had taken away his substance; and (which was worse) his wives and all that he had in the world was gone; and that which added still to his grief was, that those few followers which were yet with him, spake of stoning of him: but though his case was very sad, yet he comforts himself *in the Lord his God*. And let our case be whatever it will, our care should be to get an interest in God, and to comfort our selves in him.

It

It is in a very high strain that *David* begins this Psalm with, and the more abrupt and sudden the expressions seem to be, the more *Pathetical* and affectionate they are. *I will love thee, O Lord my strength: The Lord is my Rock, my Fortress and my Deliverer: My God, in whom I will trust, my Buckler, and the horn of my Salvation, and my Tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,* &c. Here are expressions upon expressions, his heart was full, and he scarce knew how to give his thoughts sufficient vent, in admiring and adoring the goodness of God to him. Now least these high confidences that *David* had in God, should seem to be no better than some rash, and hasty raptures: he lays down the ground of these confidences in the reiterated experiences he had had of the goodness of God to him, in *vers.* 4, 5. 6. and so on. *The sorrows of Death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid: the sorrows of Hell compassed me about, the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Name of the Lord, and cried to my God, he heard my voice out of his Temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears; then the earth shook and trembled,* &c.

I shall not need to trouble you with the several Opinions of Interpreters particularly what his distresses then were; but in general it is acknowledged by all, That his distresses were such, that if God had not helped him, none else could; and when he had none other comforter or help left, none else to depend upon, then he cries to God, and he doth not cry in vain; and

ſo you find him in another diſtreſs he was after-wards, in the 16, 17, 18. verſes of this Pſalm. *He ſent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters* (that is many afflictions) *he delivered me from my ſtrong enemy, and from them that hated me, for they were too ſtrong for me*: Relating to *Saul* (as you may ſee, if you compare that place with the Preface of the Pſalm.) *They prevented me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my ſtay, he brought me forth alſo into a large place, he delivered me becauſe he delighted in me*. Now here *David* comforts himſelf in his ſincerity, though he doth not ſpeak as a ſelf-Juſtificiary, or manifeſt the leaſt of a Phariſaical temper, as if he thought he merited any thing from the hands of God: yet it was his comfort, in reſpect of himſelf, that *God had owned his uprightneſs* in preſerving him in thoſe dangers; and it is the encouragement he gives to others; he gives alſo cautions to wicked men, for 'tis very obſervable in this Pſalme, that when *David* ſpeaks of *his* Experiences and *Comforts* in God, he frequently intermixes his *Cautions* to the Enemies of God; that if they would deal frowardly, God would deal frowardly with them. But then to *encourage* the people of God, ſays he, *With the merciful thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf merciful, with the upright man thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf upright, and with the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf pure*. In the words we have the reſult that *David's* thoughts came too (*The Lord lives*) he had ſeen how much of vanity and diſappointment there was in all Creature comforts, many of his people had been time after time knock

knockt off from them; but says he, (*the Lord lives*) and therefore here he sits down, here he is resolved to fix.

In these words be these three particulars:

1. There is a Declaration of what God is *in himself*, he *is the living God.* (*The Lord lives.*)

2. A Description of what God is *to his people*: (*And blessed be my Rock.*) *A Rock* denotes strength, safety, protection; God doth often set forth his goodness to his people under this Metaphor; He is said to be a Rock higher than all waves, a shelter from all storms: their Fortresses of old were usually built upon Rocks, that so the accesses of the Enemy might be the more difficult; and therefore they were looked upon as places of the greatest security. *Their Rock is not as our Rock, even our Enemies themselves being Judges*, says *Moses*; Deut. 32.31.

3. Here is *Davids magnifying* and *admiring of God*, upon this double consideration, both of what *God is in himself*, and of what he is *to his people*. (*The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my Salvation be exalted.*) He is careful to comfort himself in this God, and he would have others follow his practise.

Doct. That *'tis the admirable support of the people of God, that when friends die, and all Creature comforts fail, yet God lives*, yet the Lord lives. *Your Fathers where are they? and the Prophets do they live for ever?* Zech. 1. 5. Those Relations that are most comfortable, and who use to have the most care in them for us, yet these are fading Relations. *Your Fathers where are they?* Nay, those Relations that are most useful, not in *out-*

mere respects only, but also in *Spirituals*, that are dying persons, *The Prophets do they live for ever?* But when all our Creature-comforts die and vanish, *yet the Lord lives.*

There are three things that I shall speak to in the opening of this observation.

1. The first is this, *That the Lord whom we serve is the living God*; he lives: This Title I shall shew, how far it is appropriated to God above all Creatures whatsoever.

2. That as he is the living God, so *he lives as Lord.*

3. How much *this is to the support* and comfort *of all his people.*

1. That however all other Creatures may be dying, yet *God liveth*: all those Names by which God hath made himself known in Scripture, do strongly imply this Truth. That great Name *Jehovah*, which is so often mentioned in Scripture, signifies, *A God of Being*, a God that gives being to all other Creatures, and a God that is the Fountain of Being in himself. When God sends *Moses* upon that difficult Errand, of treating with *Pharaoh*, about the releasing *Israel* out of their sor bondage, *Exod.* 3. 14. this is the Name by which God makes himself known (*I am that I am hath sent thee*) that is, I that alone am, the name by which the very Heathen spake of their God *Zena, quia Zeus*, (as one glosses upon that Name) that is, they thought him to be a living God. But to be short, We find that God is often stiled in Scripture, *the living God*, to denote him to be *the true God*. 2 *King.* 19. 4. when *Rabshakeh* came, and pro-

Hezekiah into those fears, he sends to *Isaiah*, to pray to the Lord, *It may be*, saye he, *the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rabshekah, whom, the King of Assyria his Master, hath sent to reproach the living God*, that is, *the true God*. So when *David* expresseth his earnest affectionateness in desiring Communion with God, he speaks of him as *the living God*, Psalm 42. 2. *My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*, that is, for *the true God*: *When shall I come and appear before God?* And so *Psalm* 84. 2. *My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God*. And so the Prophet *Jeremiah* paraphrasing a little farther upon this word, *Jerem.* 10. 10. *But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King, at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the Nations shall not be able to abide his indignation*, he is *the living God*, and this is the Argument to prove him to be the *true God*. So *Dan.* 6. when *Darius* had been surprized in the Decree against *Daniel*, and had consented unawares to his being cast into the Den of Lyons, he came to the Den, and cried with a lamentable voyce, unto *Daniel*, and spake, saying, *O Daniel, Servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the Lions?* He is a God indeed. But farther he is often stiled *the living God*, in opposition to *dead Idols*, which were the Gods of the Heathen. So you have a notable description of those Idols which the sinners of that age did worship. *Psal.* 115. 3. and so on. *But our God he is in the Heaven, he hath done whatsoever he pleased, their I-*

dols are silver and gold, the works of men's hands, they have mouths but they speak not, eyes have they but see not, they have ears but hear not, noses have they but they smell not, they have hands but they handle not, feet have they but they walk not, neither speak they through the throat, but our God is the living God. Again, he is stiled the *living God* in opposition to *dying men*, as Magistrates are sometimes stiled Gods, *Psalm* 82. 6. *I said ye are Gods, but ye shall die like men*; and so *Deut.* 5. 26. *For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?* When God would give his people the greatest assurance of the certain accomplishment of his promises, he speaks in this language, *as I live*, : he swears by his own life. So you have it *Isa.* 49. 18. *Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold all these gather themselves together, and come to thee, as I live saith the Lord, thou shalt surely cloath thee with them all as with an Ornament, and bind them on thee as a Bride doth.* So *Numb.* 14. 20, 21. when *Moses* interceded for that repining and murmuring people, saith God, *I have pardoned according to thy word, but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord.* When God would startle sinners, and make them sensible of what is coming upon them, *as sure as I live* (saith the Lord) *his iniquity shall not go unpunished.* So *Ezek.* 5. 11. But I have sufficiently cleared this from Scripture. You see then all along, that God in Scripture is stiled *the living God*, and it is such a kind of life as no Creature is capable of, that is here ascribed to God, and that I shall shew in these 5 particulars.

1. He

1. He lives *Originally from himself*, Psal. 36. 9. *for with thee is the Fountain of life*; he is the fountain of life to *others*, and he is the Fountain of life to *himself* That life which all Creatures have is a *deriv'd life*, it is what they have receiv'd from God, *Acts* 17. 25. *Neither is he worshipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life and breath, and all things.* There is not that Creature that liveth upon the face of the earth, but it hath its life from God: and so *ver.* 28. *In him we live and move and have our being*; but that life which God liveth, it is an *underived* life: He is as one speaks, *One that hath his life from himself*. The *Moon* shines with a *borrowed light*; and all Creatures have nothing but what they have received: their very light it is from God, it is *in his light that we see light*; there is no Creature, but it is beholding to God for its very Being, for it is impossible that any Creature should be the Author of its own Being. That which once was not, could never produce it self, *for whilst it was nothing, it could do nothing*; and in all successions of being that are in the world, here is one Creature proceeds from another, and that other from another before it, and so on; so that in all successions we must needs come to some *first Being*, now this first Being must needs be *of himself* uncreated, and of himself *unoriginated*; that's one particular how God liveth, *he liveth originally and from himself.*

2. He lives *intirely*, and of himself, *without dependance* upon any other. The life of poor Creatures *as it is received* from God, *so it is upheld*

held by God. *Rom.* 11. 36. *All things are of him*, and all things are *by him*: our very breath in our Noſtrils he keeps it in; and ſhould not God keep it in, it would be every moment paſſing out; and therefore, God is not only ſtiled *the Fountain of life* (in that Pſalm quoted before) but he is alſo ſtiled *the Lord of life* (i. e. prolongs and ſhortens the lives of his Creatures as himſelf pleaſeth. *Deut.* 32. 39. *See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and make alive, I wound, and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my hands*: and you read that God hath ſet to every man his bounds beyond which he cannot paſs. *Num.* 22. 5. *The Number* (it is not ſaid of our years) but even the *Number of our very months, is with God*; *ſeeing his days are determined, the Number of his months is with thee, Thou haſt appointed bounds that he cannot paſs.* But now God is not of himſelf, we live altogether in dependance upon him. It is true, there are many *Creatures we depend upon* in the ordinary courſe of God's Providence; how many Creatures loſe their lives to ſupport, and preſerve ours? but God hath *no dependances* upon any other, *but in* and *of himſelf.*

3. He lives *moſt perfectly* (not only originally from himſelf and *intirely* in himſelf without dependance upon others (but he lives *moſt perfectly in the enjoyment of himſelf*: how many things concur together to piece out our lives to us! Look upon *man in his natural condition*, and he is the moſt neceſſitous, indigent Creature in the whole world; *made up of* nothing but *want*

...losses; we are flesh and blood, we stand in need of food and rayment, and 20 such things; and when God hath translated us into a *State of Grace*, though we have received never so much, yet still we want more. 'Tis *no life of perfection* whilst we are here on earth; there may be a perfection of *parts*, but not of *Degrees*: and indeed (observe it) *absolute perfection is to be found no where but in God alone*, he lives perfectly: we read of *Angels*, and of the *spirits of just men made perfect*, but how? it is *not* spoken, nor to be understood of *absolute perfection*: but that may be said to be *perfect, in which nothing is defective*, that is *necessary to its being*; thus *Angels* are perfect in their kind (*i.e.*) they have their compleat nature which becomes their Rank; and so *the spirits of just men* are made perfect, because they are *restored* to that perfection *by Grace*, which they *had lost by sin*. But absolute perfection is no where to be found but in God alone; in him is that infinite fulness, and therefore it is that *his happiness* is *infinitely perfect*, and such happiness that no Creature is capable of. For though the happiness of all Creatures consists in the enjoyment of God, yet these *enjoyments* are onely according to the *capacities* of Creatures: And therefore a Learned Writer compares several *Believers* to several *vessels thrown into the Sea*, here is a vessel of a *lesser* size, and there is a vessel of a *larger* size, but every vessel being thrown into the Sea is *full*, and hath as much *as it can contain*. And this is the happiness of Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. But the happiness of God is unspeak-

ſpeakable, becauſe of his infinite fulneſs in himſelf.

4. God lives *immutably*. Our life is full of changes every moment (as one ſpeaks) there *is no perſon that is two moments the ſame*; he has one moment paſt over him more than he had before when the ſecond comes. When we come into the world, we paſs from Childhood to Youth, from Youth to riper Years, but when we are come to the * * and heighth of our ſtrength, then we decline and paſs to old age again. As the *Sun* is always *in Motion* and never ſtands ſtill, but is either riſing higher and higher, until it come to the *Meridian*, and when once it is there, then it declines lower and lower again: thus it is with man, he is never at a ſtop. But it is *not ſo with God*, there is *no variableneſs, or ſhadow of turning in him*. Take the moſt immutable things in nature, and they are changeable, even the *Heavens* themſelves, *Pſal.* 102. 25, 26, 27. *Of old thou haſt laid the foundations of the earth, and the Heavens are the work of thy hands, they ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; yea, all of them ſhall wax old like a Garment, as a veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed, but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall have no end.* God therefore lives immutably, he is ſaid to be *the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever*. He is the ſame in himſelf *in all* his *excellencies* and perfections, and he is the ſame *to his people*.

5. God doth not only live immutably for a Time, but Æternally, *for ever*. 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Who only hath immortality, dwelling in that light which*

which no man can approach unto, who only hath Immortality. Why, are not *Angels immortal?* and are not the *Souls of men* immortal? it would be ill news to wicked men if their Souls could die with their Bodies, and if death were no more to them, than to other creatures, that when they die there were an end of them, that they were not subject to an after-account in another world. That is not the meaning of it, but he only hath *Immortality in himself.* For though *Angels* be *Immortal*, yet this Immortality is not *per naturam*, but *per Gratiam*; it is not so much from their nature, as the support of God: for God supports all things in their Beings; and the infinite power of God doth as much appear in his works of *supportation* and preservation, as in his works of *Creation* at the first, And so for *the Soul of man* it is immortal: but still all this is because *God upholds it* to all Eternity. But God hath Immortality, *Psalm.* 90 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst framed the earth or the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.* From everlasting? yes, and to everlasting; and so *Psalm.* 92. 8, 9. you have the like expression. *But thou Lord art most high for evermore, for lo thine enemies, O Lord, lo thine enemies shall perish, but thou shalt abide for ever:* and so *Psalm.* 102. 12. *But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance to all Generations.* I might multiply places; for this is so often mentioned in Scripture, that I must needs forbear farther Quotations. *A thousand years with the Lord are but as one day*, 2 Pet. 3. 8. He is the *Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,*

without

without beginning or end of days: that is spoken of Christ.

This is the first thing propounded to be spoken to, That the *God whom we own, and whom we serve, is the living God* in opposition to *dead Idols*, and *all dying Creatures*. He lives *originally* from himself. *Entirely of himself*. *Perfectly* in the enjoyment of himself. He lives *immutably*, and he lives *eternally*.

2. The Second thing was, That *he lives as Lord* (that is) as God exercising his *Dominion over all things* both in Heaven and earth, and this you find very frequently mentioned in Scripture. *Psal.* 97. 1. It is spoken by way of comfort, and of awakening to the wicked: so *Psal.* 97. 1. and *Dan.* 4. 3. The Mediatory Kingdom Christ received from his Father, he had *all power communicated to him*, as *Matt.* 28. 18. *God hath exalted him above all, and made him the head of all*, Eph. 1. 21, 22, 23. This Kingdom of Christ is so established on him, that he shall rule so long as there is *one Enemy* remaining *to be subdued*, and conquered, 1 *Cor.* 15. 26, 27. and as long as *one lost person* is *to be called* in, preserved, and taken care of in this world. Christ retains his Dominion; and when these things are finished, Christ resignes his Kingdom into his Fathers hands, and God becomes *all in all*: and he lives *as Lord*, to *make good all his Promises* to his people, and to fulfil his *threatings* against his Enemies. Now consider how large a *Treasure the Promises* are, such, as we cannot desire any blessing beyond what the Promises do contain. As to the Blessings of this life, what can we desire more than

God

God promises? God promises we shall have so much of this world as is for our good; and would you have that which is for your hurt? this was a rash desire. God hath promised to free us from so much evil in this world, as our condition can be safe without; afflictions shall be for a little time if need be, no more and no longer shall our afflictions continue, then what is needful, and so long as we need them, they shall.

3. How is this for the support and *comfort of God's people* that *God lives?*

I answer, if we consider *what God is*, there is enough in this to (so speak it highly to the advantage of his People. Look upon God in those excellencies by which he hath made known himself to his poor Creatures, and this must needs be greatly to their support and comfort, though all other comforts should be taken from from them; *God is the Fountain of all good*, and there is that infinite fulness in him, that whatever our wants be, yet there is enough in his fulness to supply us. Though our wants are far more, and greater then we are able to understand, yet they are not too great for infinite fulness to supply. We want all those mercies by which God hath commended his love to poor Creatures, there is not one single mercy, either pardoning, or purging, or sealing mercy which we need not. But our comfort is, we cannot need that mercy, but there is enough in God for our relief, according to our particular case; because he is the Fountain of all blessings, the *God of all consolation*, the Giver of *every good gift*.

He

He is the Fountain of his own perfections, he is the Fountain of all the Excellencies are amongst the Creatures; the very Angels themselves do but shine with a borrowed light. *Rom.* 11. 36. *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.* Nay, he is *a full Fountain*, an *Eternal* Fountain that can never be exhausted or drawn dry. Though God hath been thousands of years communicating good to his Creatures, and that in divers ways, yet he is as full as ever. We have some Resemblances of this in Nature. Though the *Sun* hath been priviledging the world with its light for some thousands of years, yet the Sun is as full of light as ever. And the Sea, though it hath been so long supplying the streams, yet is as full of water as ever: yet all these Resemblances are but dark Representations, and shadows of that infinite fulness and excellencie that is in God. Alas! these Creature helps are but like leaking vessels and *broken Cisterns*, so *Jeremiah* compares them, *Jer.* 2. 13. *For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out Cisterns, broken Cisterns that can hold no water*: they are but *Cisterns*, and therefore cannot hold much, and they are *broken* Cisterns, and therefore cannot hold what they have long; all our Creature-comforts are but like *Hagars bottle* that will be soon empty and dry, *Gen.* 21. 15. But now, though God hath bestowed millions of blessings upon his people, yet he hath as many blessings in store for them as ever. None shall have cause to say to him as *Esau* to *Isaac*, with tears, *Hast thou*

my blessing, my Father, bless me, even me also, O my Father. The Name by which God made himself known to *Abraham* was this, *I am God All-sufficient, Gen.* 17. 1. and what greater thing can be said than this *All-sufficient.* Let our case be what it will; suppose we are stript of all our comforts, God hath taken away a most comfortable Child, a most loving Husband, a most faithful friend, one that hath been in all respects very helpful, both to our Souls, and to the comforts of our lives heretofore; yet what is all this to the All-sufficiencie of God? if we look upon upon him as *God All sufficient*, and consider this *God still lives*, though the Ciftern may be dry, yet the Fountain is open, though Creature comforts may be gone, yet God is still where he was, this must needs be a ground of Comfort to the people of God.

Again, Look upon God not only as the Fountain of all good, but as the *Sum and Quintessence* of all good; and this must needs be comfortable to his people; for whatever is of comfort in any Creature must needs be much more in God, for God that makes any Creature comfortable to us, can in the absence of that Creature communicate the same comfort to us from himself. Observe it according to that old Rule, *That which makes any thing such, must needs it self be more such.* The Schoolmen speak of three ways by which we may come to the knowledge of God. The first is by way of *Causality*, when we take notice of those various excellencies that are scattered up and down in the Creatures, and all these meet in God, yea, and meet

in

in him without the least mixture of those imperfections wherewith they are clogg'd in the Creature; but that's not all. Secondly, they are all in God by way of *Infiniteness*. Is a friend comfortable? God is a friend beyond all friends. Is a faithful *Counseller* a great help? what help can you liken unto God? in respect of his Being, saith *Isaiah* 40. 18. *To whom will you liken me?* where is the person, or that friend who can do that for you, which I have done, and am still ready to do? Do you look upon *ease* as a great priviledge, there's no such ease as that which God gives; he gives ease to troubled minds, peace to wounded Consciences. Nay, is life it self desirable? you read *Psal.* 63. 3. God is much more desirable; in life and death God is desirable. *Thy loving kindness* (saith he) *is better than life*: he had rather die in the favour of God, than live in a condition of estrangement from God. Alas! what is the light of a Candle to the light of the Sun? God is (in the absence of all Creature-comforts) not only as good as those comforts would be, but he is much better to them; as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, *Am not I better to thee than ten Sons?* 1 Sam. 1. 8. When the people of God do leave no less than their all here below, they leave Friends, Relations, Acquaintance, their Creature-enjoyments, they part with all at once, and do you think they are any losers by it, when they go to the enjoyment of God alone? For it is said in Heaven, *God shall be all in all*, there they have all made up in God. But then farther, look upon God not only as the Fountain and Quintessence of all good,

good, but look upon him as the *supreme disposer* of all things in the world, and thus *God yet lives*; though we have enemies, and dangers, and wants; and though we have not the Counsel of the friend we had before, nor the instruction of those Ministers we had, by whom formerly we have been refreshed, yet still that God lives who hath the disposal of all things in the world in his own hands; insomuch there is not a hair falls from our heads without the will of our Father. *Lament.* 3. 37. *Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass when the Lord commandeth it not?* there are *many devises in the heart of man, but the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand.* Prov. 9 21. and so *Psalm.* 103. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.* The very Devils themselves are in Gods chain, they can do nothing but what he permits. *Satan* was forc'd to *ask leave* of God before he could tempt *Job*, and so of Christ before he could enter into the very *swine*. So that whatever our enemies may be, yet consider that God can either *turn the heart* of those enemies, (for he hath the disposal of all things) or if not turn their hearts, he can *tye their hands*: or if he do neither, but leave them to act maliciously against his People, God can *turn that to good* which they *intended for evil*: for he is the supreme disposer of all things: and he is infinitely wise, and knows how to dispose all for the best. Such is Gods *wisdom*, that he hath *no second thoughts*, but acts all according to the purpose of his own will; there is no counsel so secret, nor any contrivance carried on so

much under ground, but God seeth under all these vaults and coverings, *All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. 4. 13. and the night to him is as the day, and the darkness as the light; if he permit the designes of his enemies to take effect, it shall be no further than for *his glory* and *his peoples good*, Psal. 76. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*: and so *Isa.* 10. 12. *When I have performed my whole work upon Mount Zion, and upon Jerusalem, then*, what then? Then *will I punish the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.* God makes use of his enemies as his *Skullions* to *scour* off that *Rust* which is upon the *Graces* of his people; and when he hath done this work by them, then will he punish his enemies.

Again, look upon God in his *Almighty power*, he can help when all help fails, he can deal effectually with the hearts of his enemies, or if he let them go on, yet he that brought light out of darkness, can bring good out of evil. It is strange to consider, how wonderfully *God hath carried on* the designes of his Grace, both toward particular Souls, and toward his Church in general, even *by them* that have *most opposed* those designes; that *Satan* himself should be an Instrument of mans Salvation, in acting *his malice upon Christ*, in seeking his death: thus God *takes the wise in their own craft*, and he overwits them in all their policies and contrivances.

Again, look upon God in his *tender Compassions*, and certainly there be no compassions that can

can be found on earth, that come near to the infinite compassions of a gracious God; *As a father pities his child so the Lord pities them that fear him: a Mother may forget her sucking child, but the Lord never forgets his people.* We read of those wonderful expressions of Gods love to his people of old; *When God cometh to avenge his people of their enemies, he ariseth out of his place with might and strength to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain* Isa. 26. 21. But then consider *his truth and faithfulness*, God hath been pleased to come under the engagements of many promises to his people: it was *freeness* in God *to promise*; but it is his *faithfulness* to *perform*; if the word be gone out of Gods mouth, that word shall not fail of being fully executed. And then by way of close, consider Gods *immutableness and constancie* in all these excellencies, he is the Fountain of all good, he is the Sum of all good, he is the disposer of all the affairs of the world, he is infinite in wisdom, great in power, tender in his compassions, and immutably constant in all these. Alas! our most loving friends that are so for the present, may turn our enemies. *David* speaks of those that had been *his familiar friends*, yet what sore things did he suffer at their hands? *Cæsar* was murdered, you know, by his own Son; and I might give notable instances of those that have been at present real in their friendship; yet because they are mutable Creatures that friendship hath turned into enmity. But since God lives immutably in all these excellencies, there-

fore it is *much to the comfort of Gods people*, if we consider *what God is*.

2. If we consider what *interest* his people have *in him*; they have an Interest not only as his Creatures, so others have also; but they have a *Covenant Interest*, *I entered into Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine*: and they have an Interest not only by Creation, but by virtue of their *own choice*. God hath chosen them, and he hath enabled them to make their choice of him: and this is the Covenant God makes with such, *I will be to them* (says God) *a God, and they shall be to me a people*, Heb. 8. 10. Now certainly this Covenant-Interest, it is of all Interests in God the *most supporting*, because in this Covenant where God bestows himself, he bestows every thing of himself upon such a person, so far as may be for their comfort, and for their benefit. For if God be in Covenant ours, then whatever is in God will be ours. His *Wisdom* will be ours to direct and counsel us, and in his Wisdom there can be no mistake or oversight, he is infinitely above both. If God be ours, his *Power* will be ours to support us, and secure us, to support and protect us in dangers, and to bestow what things soever are needful for us. And what can be thought too hard for God to do, who hath already done such great things for his people? Enough to astonish those that read what is left upon Record. He that preserved *Israel* in the *Red Sea*, he that commanded the *Rock* to give forth water, he that commanded *Manna* from Heaven, he that turned the *Sun* in its course, he that stopt the mouth

of *Lyons*, he that hath done such great things, certainly his power is such, that in comparison of it all other is weaknes. And besides, his *goodnes* will be ours to pity us, and his *faithfulness* ours to recompence us; God is pleased to call it a *Recompence* (*i. e.*) God first gives Grace, and then recompences his own Graces; but it is not of merit but of Grace still. Nay, all the *Offices of Christ* will be for our good, if God be ours indeed, he will be our Father, and his Son will exercise towards us all the offices of a Mediator; both in pleading with God on our behalf; and in pleading with us on Gods behalf. In procuring acceptance to our prayers, and in pleading the Commands of God to find acceptance with us. Truly (friends) if you consider how much this one thing contains, what God is in himself, & how fully God makes over all his excellencies to his people so far as is for their good; and certainly this must needs be for the support & comfort of his people, that although all Creature-comforts may die, yet *the Lord liveth*: and so I have briefly gone over these 3 things propounded. I shall now come to the *Application* of what hath been spoken.

Use 1. To *inform* us that there is no *Reason* why the people of God should *be dejected when their Friends and Relations die*, because God lives; what an abundance of Comfort there is in this you have heard already, he in whom all our happiness is, he lives; he in whom are all our hopes & comforts, he lives; he that is the fountain of whatever we can desire or enjoy, is where he was: *Though Abraham be ignorant*

rant of us, and Israel know us not, yet doubtless thou art our Father: he ſtill retains his knowledge of us, and his affection to us. Although we may be deprived of leſſer matters, yet if we have our God, we have enough: we may have a large enjoyment of Creature-comforts, and not be happy in them: Nay, we may have the largeſt enjoyment of theſe things, and yet be miſerable; notwithſtanding them. What are *Wine and Oyl* and all Creature-comforts in compariſon of the *light of Gods countenance?* You ſee *David* ſpeaks contemptibly of all theſe things, *Pſalm* 4. 6, 7. When *Micah* had loſt his gods, ſaid he, *and what have I more?* Judg. 18. 24. Indeed could a gracious Soul be ſeparated from God, it might then cry out as *Micah* did under his Idolatrous miſtake. But God lives, who by his preſence at any time is able to make up the loſs of his deareſt comforts he takes from us. I have ſhewed you there is infinitely more in God for our comfort, than there can be in all Creatures; becauſe whatſoever good is in them, God puts it in them, and makes them good to us; and he that makes our comforts good unto us, he alone can ſupply us in the abſence of thoſe Comforts. God alone is an *abſolute, commenſurate, adaquate* good, who only can *fill* the capacious deſires of our Soul. the Soul of man is too large for any but God to fill, who is the *Rock of Ages*. Now whatever God doth with his people in the removing of uſeful Friends and the moſt dear Relations, and moſt eminent Inſtruments of their good, yet if they have no cauſe to be dejected, for this is

poſ

enough to answer all, that God who is the Lord *liveth*. You see in this how much the people of God have to ballance all their losses; nay, more than to ballance them, there is enough to weigh down all in this single consideration, *the Lord liveth*; he liveth that by his care hath hitherto kept us. Alas! who could have preserved us, if God had not taken the care of us? It is said, *We are kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. and we are bid *to cast all our care upon him*, because *he careth for us*, 1 Pet. 5. O! do but consider what assurance God hath given his people of his care and mindfulness of them in whatever he doth; in whatever he doth towards them, and whatever he doth in the world: *Rom* 8. 28 *All things work together for the good of them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose*: not *some* things, nor *many* things, but *all* things; though perhaps *some* particulars may at *present work for evil*, yet they shall work *together for good*: As in a *Medicine*, some ingredients may be too hot, and some too cold, but being put all together, the Medicine may be good, and very proper and apt for the Distemper. *Psalm.* 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies*. Look into the experiences of former Ages, saith *David*, (and he speaks it for his own and others encouragement) *Psal.* 37. 25. *I have been young, and am now old, yet did I never see the righteous forsaken*, (they may be reduced to great wants, but not forsaken) *nor their seed begging bread.*

Use 2. Of *Reproof* to such *as place their Comforts in dying vanities*: you see we have a living God to look up unto. The truth is, most of the troubles that we undergo here on earth, they are troubles we make to our selves; and amongst others, this is one, by placing our Comforts upon any thing on this side God; in doing this, we bring our selves under an absolute necessity of disappointment; for if we will lean upon a *broken Reed*, that Reed will be weak & cannot support us; & if we will build upon a *sandy foundation*, that sandy foundation must needs fail, when the winds and storms of trouble do arise. Let me therefore leave this with you, he that builds his hopes, and places his comforts upon any thing that is dying and fading, this man *brings himself under an absolute necessity of disappointment*. Therefore (says *Job*) *the hope of the Hypocrite shall perish*, Job 8. 13. he that pleaseth himself in those appearances of Grace that will vanish when they come to the trial, his hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

But that's not all, in placing our hopes upon any thing besides God, we do highly *provoke God*, and put our selves very much *out of his Protection*: for if we think our selves safer in the hands of Creatures than in the hands of God, and happier in the enjoyment of Creatures than in the enjoyment of God, what a disparagement do we hereby put upon God? This is the highest affront we can offer him. The truth is, we can neither prudently, nor well fix upon any thing but God. Says *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. when he had many troubles, *I know whom I have be-*

lieved

and, and whom I have trusted, I know where to fix my hopes and expectations, and this my support. Now whenever we go from God, we go to *our loss*, for in going from him, let us go where we will, we do but go from *fulness* to *emptiness*, and from *strength* to *weakness*.

1. Consider first, The *inability* of Creatures to relieve us, they may help in some cases, and yet they alone cannot help, unless they have a *Commission* and *Blessing* from God. *Food alone* cannot nourish, nor *Physick alone* cure, *Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God.*

2. Though these things may be helpful *for a Time*, yet it is but for a time; a little time, and these things are at an end: but to live upon God, is to live indeed. The life of a Christian, is to live a Heaven here upon earth.

Another Branch of this *Reproof* to such as do *provoke this God against themselves*, he is a *living God*, and therefore is *sensible* of all those affronts we offer to him. A dead thing you know is unsensible. All those *Idols* which the Heathen worshipped of old were *unsensible*, but our God is a living God: and as he is sensible of the affronts he receives, so he is *able to revenge* those affronts, he is able to execute all that he hath threatned against sinners: and *it is a fearful thing* (says the Apostle) *to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Use 3. Which is very considerable in this case. *How may we know whether* this *living God* be *our God* or no? It is true, there's an abundance of comfort in this, but this Comfort is re-

restrained only to those that have an *Interest in God*. Now, the clearest way to *discern our Interest in God*, is to observe what *Interest God hath in us*. Do you *esteem him*, and prize him above all things else? are you content to be reproached of others, so you be thought well of by God, 1 *Cor.* 2. 13. Do you *value his ways* above the most gainful Imployment in the world, and *grudge the world* those *encroachments* it's apt to make upon you? when you are engaged in the things of God & Heaven, do you look upon the things of heav'n to be so considerable, as to drown all the proffers that sin and Satan and the world can make? are you sensible their *Temptations are to your loss*? have you such thoughts of *Gods Cross*, that you can count it your *Crown*? thus did *Moses*. What are your *affections* on? Are they to God? do you *love love him above all*? had you rather displease the world than him? Is God the highest in your thoughts? do you value him so as to *loath* every thing *that stands in opposition* to him? and do you hate every false way? if you love God, you hate all evil. Do you *fear him above all* others? *Heb.* 11. 'tis said, *Noah feared, and prepared an Ark*. Do you *delight in God*, and are his withdrawings the most sadning to you? Consider what your *carriage* to God is? do you *devote* your selves to his *service*? do you *submit* quietly to his *dispensations*, and to whatever Providences he exercises you with? are you with *Paul pressing* after more of God, *forgetting what is behind*, Phil 13.14. The way to know whether we have any interest in God, is to observe what interest he hath in us.

Use

Use 4. Of *Advice* That you would *make this living God your God.* Time will come when this living God will be able to ſtand you inſtead, when you are taking an everlaſting farewel of this world: now if you have not this God for your *Friend*, he will be your enemy; but if you have this God for your Friend, you have enough; you then may be able to ſay as *Habakkuk*, *chap.* 3. 17, 18. Let your hopes therefore be in this living God, who can lift you up above the viciſſitudes, and uncertainties of theſe outward things. Though Comforts may ebb, and God may knock off many eminent and uſeful props and helps; yet remember you have a *Fountain* ſtill to go to, though the *ſtreams* be dried up. You may *find* much more in God, then you can poſſibly *loſe* in any Creature. And to this end *God takes away our comforts, to bring us nearer to himſelf.* Perhaps we Idoliz'd them, and overlov'd them, now God will remove that which kept him and us at diſtance. They are but *bad Scholars*, that learn not to draw nearer to God by afflictions, for this is Gods intent by all, to bring us nearer to himſelf.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

1 Samuel 30. 6.

And David was greatly distressed, &c. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

THE time to which these words refer, was as sad a time as ever this holy man had met with in all his dayes. Three Circumstances remarkable in the Context.

1. *Ziklags destruction, ver.* 2. The City is laid in ashes, and the people led into Captivity, instead of habitations nothing but ruine, instead of Families nothing but solitude; *Israel* is now deservedly punished by the *Amalekites*, whom before they had sinfully spared, 1 *Sam.* 15. 2, 3, 8, 9.

2. The joynt lamentation of this loss by *David* and his followers, their City is burnt with fire, and themselves almost drown'd with tears at the sight thereof; 'tis said they *wept, till they had no more power to weep.*

3. The particular aggravation of *Davids* sorrow beyond all the rest, for besides that, his affliction was the same with theirs, they lay the guilt of all theirs upon him: Every man look'd upon

upon his Companion as a sharer in his affliction, but all looked upon *David* as the Author, and therefore they who had been his followers, are now his accusers, they spake of stoning him.

In the words

1. *Davids* sore distress, spoiled of his Relations, robbed of his Creature comforts, his very life endangered.

2. *Davids* singular advantage in this his distress, his interest in the Lord as his God, when he could scarce call any thing in the world his, he could call the Lord his. [*In the Lord his God.*]

3. His serious improvement of this advantage, he encouraged, confirmed, or strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

Doct. 1. *They who are dearly beloved, may nevertheless be deeply afflicted.*

Doct. 2. *'Tis the great advantage of all sincere Believers that they have an interest in the Lord as their God.*

Doct. 3. *A serious improvement of this peculiar interest which all sincere Believers have in the Lord as their God is sufficient for their support and encouragement under the sorest of outward afflictions that can befal them in this world.*

1. Doct. *They who are dearly beloved, may nevertheless be deeply afflicted.* *David* was sorely distressed. *David* his very name in Hebrew signifies *Beloved*; a man of whom God himself gives

gives that ample testimony, *that he was a man after his own heart*, Acts 13. 22. and yet how sore were his afflictions? *Saul* and his Souldiers had banished him not only out of the City of Jerusalem, but out of the Coasts of Israel; in order to his safety, he is forced to seek shelter among the uncircumcised, nor can he long be safe there neither, the Lords of the *Philistines* work him out of favour with *Achish* their King, *David* must now be packing, the only retirement, or *Zoar* he had, was *Ziklag*: his friends who had formerly comforted him, are now in Captivity, his City a ruinous heap, all that was now left was only some small retinue, and even those though they had formerly been not only his Companions, but his Comforters in all his afflictions, yet now instead of sympathizing with him, they threaten to kill him: because themselves were distressed with him, instead of bemoaning him, and bringing water to quench the fire of his sorrow, they do but bring fewel to enflame his grief the more. The instance is full. Let me add the instance of the whole collective body of Gods people here on earth, in all Ages it hath been generally thus with them, the primitive Professors, *Heb* 11. 36, 37, 38. *of whom the world was not worthy*. Jesus Christ himself, the only beloved of the Father was yet *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs*. Consider his groans, his cries, his drops of blood; and 'tis clear therefore, that whom God dearly loves, he may and does sometimes deeply afflict, not onely equally with others, but many times above others. But for the further

further proof hereof take these two Arguments.

1. *Argum.* The sharpest of outward afflictions are not inconsistent with the peculiar love of God, as the sweetest of outward mercies are not the Arguments of that love. Christ tells his Disciples, *John* 18. 36. *His Kingdom is not of this world*: We must distinguish betwixt the Kingdom of his power and Providence, and this certainly is both in and of this world, and the Kingdom of his grace and goodness, and this indeed is not of this world: The Laws of this Kingdom are spiritual, the priviledges, the homage, the comforts, the all of this Kingdom is spiritual; as concerning all temporals, *love & hatred are not known by all that is before us*, Eccles. 9. 2. God hath higher and greater things whereby to shew his favour and anger than all these outward things are.

2. *Argum.* The sorest of outward afflictions are so far from being inconsistent with peculiar love, that they are many times the expressions and evidences of that love, *Heb.* 12. 6. *whom the Lord loveth he chastneth*, &c. *Psal.* 119. 75. There is a design of mercy to them in all their seeming miseries. Consider those two Scriptures, *Psal.* 25. 10 *Rom.* 8. 28. the very best of Gods people make afflictions necessary in order to their good, and therefore God will not so far neglect them as not to chastise them. A tender Parent that beholds his Child running on in extravagancies, the more he loves him, the more severe he is in correcting him, and the reason is, because he hath no patience to see his Child

Child ruin'd: as for others God lets them alone in their sins, *Hos.* 4. 17. he will not be at the pains of correcting them, *Isa.* 1. 5. but the particular designes that God hath in correcting his people are almost innumerable, take only these few instances.

1. Sometimes it is to cure their spiritual maladies, afflictions are Gods Physick to purge, his furnace to refine.

2. Sometimes to wean them from the world. God imbitters these Creature comforts, as the Nurse rubs the breast with wormwood and by that means weans the Child. The world never doth seem a more vain and empty thing than in a time of affliction: we are apt to make it our Idol, but we then find it like *Jobs* friends, *Miserable comforters, a Physitian of no value.*

3. Sometimes to exercise their graces; *Jobs* patience had never been so eminent, had it not been so notably tried. God does therefore reduce his people to great streights, that their trials may be a testimony to those graces himself hath wrought in them, their faith, their patience, their hope, *&c.*

4. Sometimes to encrease their experiences, and that in two respects.

1. Concerning their own weakness. Times of affliction are sifting seasons. God then discovers us to our selves: the skill of a Pilot appears in a storm, the valour of a Souldier in a Battle, the strength or weakness of a Christian in a time of affliction.

2. Concerning Gods goodness; never doth God more fully manifest the bowels of his compassion,

passion, than in a time of persecution, when ordinary Providences were not sufficient for the people of Israel, God provided for them by Miracles sometimes to prepare them for service. The infinitely wise God who hath appointed several men to several services hath several moulds to fit and shape them for those services. *Joseph*, *Moses*, *David* those eminent instruments all trained up in afflictions. Some there are whom God intends only as privat passengers, others whom he intends as Pilots and these latter must be well acquainted with winds and Seas, rocks and sands; all the Books of Navigation can never make a skilful Mariner, there must be experience, so here.

6. Sometimes to prepare them for mercies, 'tis our misery we seldom know how to prize mercies, but when we want them. The goodness of God the more continued it is, the greater it is in it self, but the less it seems to us, and therefore God makes some pauses, some intermissions of his favours, that his mercies may thereby recover their due esteem with us, and that we may the better manage them, and thus doth God by wants fit his people for abundance, by streits for enlargements, by troubles for quietness.

7. Sometimes to sharpen their desires after Heaven; we are in this world but as Pilgrims and Travellers, God permits us to meet with hardships in our journey to mind us of our home, that our troubles here may stir up our longing after *that rest which remains for the people of God hereafter*, Heb 4. 9.

Use. Take heed of entertaining so much as one jealous thought concerning the goodness,

faithfulness, and tenderness of God towards you upon this account, because he afflicts you, 'tis hereby he discovers his care of those whose welfare he is pleased to concern himself much in.

2. Doct. *That 'tis the great advantage of all sincere Believers, that in all their afflictions they have an interest in the Lord as their God.* When *David* here could call nothing in the world his, *he could call the Lord his*: this was his advantage in that sore distress.

1. What was this advantage that *David* then had, and all sincere Believers still have in God as their God, above what others have: in answer to which,

1. There is an interest which all men have in God, as he is their Creator and Preserver.

2. There is an interest which some have in God as theirs, by vertue of their living under the tenderness of Grace, and their acceptance of these tenders, at least in their outward profession: the obstinate Jews are styled *Christ's own*, John 1. 11. and Christ and all his Privileges theirs, *Rom.* 9. 4.

3. There is an Interest Believers have in the Lord their God above these, *viz.* a Covenant-interest, an interest in the Lord not only by reason of his Sovereignty, but by reason of their submission; not only because called and invited by God, but because come over to him; God hath chosen them, and they have chosen him, and these are the people that are especially the objects of his love, his delight, his care, his peculiar treasure, *Exod.* 19. 5. all that are sincerely in Covenant with God may claim a higher

interest

interest in God as theirs, than others can, for this is the very language of the Covenant of Grace in the several periods of its promulgation, that he will in an especial manner become their God: *Thus to Abraham*, Gen. 17. 7, 8. *to the people of Israel*, Deut. 5. 2, 3, &c. *to the Jews in their Captivity*. Jer. 24, 7. *to Believers under the Gospel*, Heb. 8. 10. *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*

2. How much there is of advantage to Believers from this Covenant-interest in the Lord as their God, it is a priviledge indeed, that exceeds all that either words can express, or thoughts can reach: to have this interest in the Lord as our God, includes so very much in it, that we cannot rationally desire more. Compare *Psalm.* 16. 5, 6. and *Psalm.* 344. 15. and *Phil.* 3. 8. to have him for ours who is the most high God, *Gen.* 14. 18, 19, 20, 22. the supreme good, the only good, *Luke* 18. 19. the fountain of all good; all the excellencies that are in the Creatures are in him eminently, yea, infinitely; all created perfections compared to his, are but as a drop to the vast Ocean, as a few scattered rayes of light to the glorious body of the Sun. *Isa.* 40. 25. It was the pride of *Pompey* he could endure no superior, and of *Cæsar* he could endure no equal; but it is the prerogative of the great God, he hath none above him, or like unto him. Now that this God should so fully become the God of all sincere Believers, as the pregnancie of the expression imports, may justly be matter of astonishment. 'Tis no small matter God promises to *Abraham*, Gen. 15. to be a

Sun and shield; to believers under the Gospel he is a friend and a Father, 2 Cor. 6. 16. But when he promises to be a God, this surmounts all. Consider the largeness and comprehensiveness of this promise: For if he be a God to us.

1. Whatever he is as God is ours, *i. e.* to our support and comfort. Now who can declare what God is; we speak of him in several attributes; there is not one of all these Divine excellencies, but is much for the relief of all those that can call him their God, *i. e.* their God in Covenant: as for instance.

This wisdom is theirs for their direction and counsel: and certainly infinite wisdom can never be over-reached or defrauded. Known unto him are all things from the beginning to the end.

This power is theirs to protect them and provide for them: and certainly Omnipotence can never be resisted or retarded: if his hand be lifted up, whether in a way of judgment or mercy, who can turn it back. Can any thing be difficult to that God, who by a word commands the whole frame of Nature out of nothing; he that led *Israel* through the Red Sea, Commanded water out of flinty Rocks; rained Manna down from Heaven; stopped the mouths of Lions; what can be thought hard for such a God to do?

His compassion is theirs to pity them, and act for them, and surely all the tenderest compassions that can be found on earth are infinitely short of those bowels of mercy which are in God,

God, as a Father pities his Children, so the Lord pities those that fear him.

Tis faithfulness is theirs, both to own them here, and recompence them for ever. This is his promise, Jer. 32. 40.

2. Not only what he is in his Essence, but whatever he is in his Subsistence is theirs, himself in their Father, his Son their head, exercising all his Offices towards them in pleading for them with God, and pleading from God with them: his Spirit is theirs to convince them, convert them, to purge them, to improve them, to quicken them, to witness for them, to supply them both with grace and comfort.

3. Whatever he hath is theirs, his Creatures to serve them, his Angels to guard them, his graces to adorn them, his Ordinances to improve them, his comforts to support them, his glory to crown them, &c.

4. Whatsoever he doth in the world is theirs, i. e. for their good: the Providences of God are various, his ways a great deep, yet though clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitations of his Throne. Whatever he doth in the world, yet this is undoubted, he hath an eye at the good of his people in some kind or other, though not visible unto us.

Use. Inform. 1. The astonishing goodness and bounty of God to his Covenant-people, he hath bestowed himself upon them, and what can even infinite bounty bestow more, *Heb 6. 13. 'Tis said, because there was none greater to swear by, he swore by himself*: so here, *because*

there was nothing so great he could bestow, but bestowed himself. How infinitely much is there in this? so much that we can neither need nor desire more. Oh what a heighth! a depth! a length! a breadth of love is here surpassing knowledge! the less we are able to understand it, the more we should admire it, *Rom. 8.*

2. The dreadful condition of all those who live without God in this world; of all persons these are the worst provided for against danger, or with comforts, whatever their condition may be in respect of earthly confluencies, yet have we cause to pity them and pray for them: consider but

1. The meanness of those mercies they enjoy; they are but husks that God sometimes bestows in anger, and denies in favour.

2. The mixture that is in their mercies, there is a curse mingled with their blessings, their table is a snare, their enjoyments a trap and a stumbling block.

3. The momentaniness of their enjoyments; 'tis but a little while and all such comforts have an end.

4. The desolateness of their condition, when these comforts are gone, all is then gone with them.

Use. Examination. How may we know that we have an interest in the Lord as our God.

1. What are your thoughts of God? is he so high in your thoughts, that all things else are low? can you say in sincerity of heart with David, *Psalm 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire in comparison of*

thee?

him: we cannot own him as God unless we thus set him uppermost in our thoughts: do you account him your riches, your treasure, your happiness; Do you prize his favour above the applause of men? are you contented to be reproached by others, if you may be owned by him? do you value his ways above the most profitable imployments in the world? do you think your time never so well spent and improved, as when bestowed upon his service. *Psalm.* 84. 10. do you account his encouragements above all earthly allurements? and that all the world can proffer are poor contemptible things to him that understands the inheritance of the Saints in light? do you look upon his Cross as your Crown? thus did *Moses, Heb.* 11. 25.

1. What are your affections towards God? do you love him above all? this is the great Command, *Deut.* 6. 5. that is our God which we most love: it is said of the Epicureans, they made their bellies their gods. *Phil.* 3. 19. 2 *Tim.* 3. 4. That *they were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.* do you so love God as to loath whatever stands in opposition to God? *Psalm.* 97. 10. so as to loath whatever stands in competition with him? 1 *John* 2. 15. do you so fear him, as not to fear to displease others in pleasing of him? thus *Dan.* 3. from *ver.* 13 to *ver* 19. *Dan.* 6. 10. do you delight in him? despise all things in comparison of him? thus did *Paul, Phil.* 3. 8. do you prize all things in reference to him? are his withdrawings of all things the most sadning?

3. What are your carriages toward God?

do you fully devote your self to his service that you have or are? 2 Cor. 8. 5. do you pretty submit and rest well contented with his disposals in all things? are you ever pressing after more of God? Phil. 3. 14.

4. What is your conformity to Christ? 1 Joh. 2. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself to walk even as he also walked*: and of all patterns of holiness none is like that we have in Christ.

1. His self denial: this is the highest instance we have in Scripture. We read of the self denial of *Abraham* in two things, in leaving his Country, and being ready to sacrifice his Son, though a Son of many prayers on his part, and of many promises from God. Of the self denial of *Moses*: but the self-denial of Christ doth infinitely exceed all instances besides.

The glory he left was such as no Creature was capable of.

The misery he underwent such as no mere Creature was able to have undergone: his whole life was a life of self denial, his entrance into the world, his continuance in it, and his passage out of it, all of them high acts of self-denial.

The persons for whom he denied himself were such as could not deserve that kindness, nor desire it, that could not requite it, but in whom was every thing that might have hindered it: and yet this person that denied himself was one that stood upon even ground with God the Father, *Phil.* 2. 6.

2. The life of Christ was a pure undefiled life,

the lives of the best of men have been cho-
ked with blemishes, their best and fairest co-
have not been without blots; but it is said
of Christ, *he was without spot*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. 1 *Pet.*
22. there were many things in Christ at which
many were offended; the Scribes and Pharisee
at his conversing with sinners; the Disciples
themselves sometimes were offended at the se-
verity of his Doctrine; but the cause of these
offences was in them not in him. The admira-
ble exemplariness of his life appears.

In that under the forest of afflictions he never
discovered the least of impatience; his Name
was reproached, his person contemned, his ve-
ry Soul grieved, yet did he not express so much
as one hard thought of God.

The highest favours could not make him less
humble.

The strongest temptations could not allure
him from his faithfulness, *Matt.* 4.

The greatest oppositions could not slacken his
diligence, or make him remiss.

In one word, his obedience was so full, that
he left nothing unfinished of all that God requi-
red from him, *John* 17. 4.

3. A most active and useful life in reference
to God, in serving him; in reference to man,
in saving poor lost Souls. Consider his zeal to
God, *John* 2. 17. his melting compassions to-
wards the Souls of poor sinners, his invitations,
encouragements, sad resentments of denials, and
obstinate refusals, his stooping to the meanest
offices in order to his peoples good, *John* 13 his
preferring doing good to the world before en-
joying

joying all the good of it, his unwearied laboriousneſs in ſeeking and ſaving them that were loſt: the more conformable you are to the life of Chriſt, the clearer is your title to thoſe Promiſes which the Covenant contains which is eſtabliſhed with poor Creatures in and through Chriſt.

3. Doct. *A ſerious improvement of this peculiar intereſt which all ſincere Believers have in the Lord as their God, is ſufficient for their ſupport and encouragement under the foreſt of outward diſtreſſes that can befal them in this world.* A clear inſtance of this we have in *David* here, when his Companions (whoſe diſtreſſes were leſs than his) had ſuch a damp on their hearts, and were exceedingly diſpirited, *David* was ſtill and quiet, and the great Antidote he made uſe of was, [*he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God*] he doth not break out into complaints either againſt God or againſt them, but betakes himſelf to God for Counſel what was to be done in ſuch a caſe as his was, *ver.* 7. and that which kept his ſpirit in ſo ſedate and calm a temper was [*he encouraged himſelf*] *viz.* he improved this priviledge to his ſupport and comfort, this was a courſe he had often experimented, *Pſal.* 18. 2. *Pſ* 27. 1. *Pſa.* 46. throughout, this was his judgment in the caſe as to others, *Pſal.* 112. 7, 8. Two things will make this more evidently appear.

1. This intereſt in the Lord as our God though it is an unſpeakable priviledge and ſufficient for our ſafety, yet this ſingly is not ſufficient for our actual & preſent comfort, unleſs it be cleared & impro-

improved, that 'tis a great and unspeakable priviledge hath been demonstrated in the explication of it, that 'tis sufficient for our safety appears.

1. Because this interest is indissoluble: God doth (if I may so speak) play fast and lose with his people; his affections towards them, are no fickle, no wavering affections, he is not off and on with them, but where once he sets his heart nothing can take it off, *John* 13. 1. *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. thousands of calamities may dissolve your relation to all Creature-comforts, but nothing can dissolve it to God.

2. While this relation continues there can be no diminution of his love and care; affections are very strong in all those relations wherein God describes the relation he himself stands in to his people; that of a Lord, a Father, a Husband, *If God be for us, who can be against us.*

3. There can be no kind of adversaries able to match God; how contemptibly doth God speak of the proudest adversaries his Church had, *Isa.* 51, 12. 13. *Dan.* 7. his wisdom and his power are indisputable, and so are his affections towards his: he can do what he pleases, and give what he pleases, and he will do for, and give to them whatever he sees shall be for their advantage; his promises are so large and full, that we cannot rationally desire more.

2. Though this interest in the Lord as our God be sufficient for our safety; yet this singly is not sufficient for our comfort, though it will in-

insensibly support, it cannot actually refresh, without it be improved.

1. Because it is not the reality but visibility of this priviledge that affords actual comfort.

2. This priviledge may be darkned and eclipsed, as we may see in *Heman*, *David*, and *Isai.* 50. 10. this priviledge must be improved: thousands of cases there are, in which nothing but a sense of our interest in the Lord as our God can bear up our hearts: what are riches, greatness, parts, in the world, sinful shiftings, carnal compliances, and all kind of imaginable offences against danger, in time of our greatest distresses: nothing but this Covenant interest in the Lord as our God.

Use. Exhortation. In all your distresses fly to this priviledge as your chief fort, your only refuge: God hath cast our Lot in times full of danger, and is it wisdom to have our weapons to seek when our enemies are in view? the expert Seaman, when he sees a storm approaching is careful to keep within his harbour; there are many visible symptomes of a storm approaching: many black clouds hang over heads, the best refuge we can make use of, is our interest in the Lord as our God, to plead that with him; this was a course *David* had much experience of in all his streights, *Psal.* 119 94. fly to this as your strong hold, *Zech* 9. 12.

Motives. 1. 'Tis is a debt we owe to God; God hath sufficiently provided for the safety and comfort of all his people in all conditions, and is it not great ingratitude in us not to make use of those advantages he affords us.

He hath sufficiently provided for their safety

in

chaining up the rage and power of enemies, that they can reach no farther than those comforts, which they may comfortably be without; they may reach their estates, their liberties, their lives, but not their Souls, their everlasting comforts in another world, *Matt.* 10. 28. *Rom.* 1. 5. *John* 10. 28, 29.

Yea, he hath abundantly provided for their comfort; he would not have his servants go on discouragedly in the work he hath set them about; but with all chearfulness, alacrity, and readiness of mind, and *shall we thus requite the Lord*, Deut. 32. 32. 6. as not to serve him with chearfulness in the abundance of all things.

3. 'Tis a debt we owe to our selves; God hath intrusted every man, especially with his own Soul, *Luke* 12. 20. and those despondent thoughts which are the fruit of our unbelief are not only our affliction but our sin.

4. 'Tis an honour to the Gospel in the primitive persecutions the courage and fortitude of professours made the Heathens cry out (*Great is the God of Christians*) their patience, their thankfulness their rejoycings in their sufferings did highly honour their Principles even among their enemies.

5. 'Tis not so great an advantage to be exempted from affliction as to be enabled to go chearfully through them. *Zeno* that great Merchant thought his shipwrack the best Voyage he had ever made in his life, he hade many profitable Voyages before; but by this losing Voyage he gained his Soul.

6. You know not how soon such calamities may

may overtake you, that you may have need of greater and stronger supports than you ever yet had, when death comes, and worldly troubles set upon you like an armed man.

6. This hath been the renown and glory of those eminent worthies who are now with God; they have chearfully born their testimony and obtained a good report through faith, *Heb.* 11.

2. *Use. Direction.* But how should we improve our interest in the Lord as our God in a time of trouble?

1. By examining the very foundation and ground-work of all your claims; an errour in the foundation hazards the whole structure, be sure therefore you begin not at the wrong end: a mistake in a Principle occasions a thousand: if you set out in a wrong path, the farther you go, the more you wander, begin therefore here; am I in the number of those who can warrantably look up to the Lord as their God; multitudes there are who call God Father, and yet are of their father the Devil, *John* 8. 41, 42, 44. and many again there are who through the weakness of their faith, are too shie in making those claims to this priviledge which they may of right: many are hasty in catching at the comforts of the promises, before they discern in themselves the dispositions to which these promises are made; begin therefore with all wariness.

2. Improve your interest in God by frequent reviews of those rich treasures you have in him, when once you can resolve this grand Quære, that God is yours. In what affectionate elevations

tions and heavenly raptures do we find the spi-
rit of *David* upon these reviews, *Psal.* 118. 28.
*Thou art my God, and I will praise thee, thou art
my God and I will exalt thee.*

All the necessities in the world cannot make
him poor who hath such a God for his portion.
There are several sorts of riches mentioned in
Scripture, *Luke* 12. 21. *James* 2. 5. but of all
kind of riches, this is the most desirable. Of
our selves we are poor necessitous Creatures,
made up of wants, empty Cisterns, but he is a
full fountain: our wants of all kinds are far
greater than we are able to express, but we can
none of us want so much as he is able to sup-
ply.

All the calamities in the world cannot make
him miserable who hath God for his happiness:
the primitive Christians did chearfully bear
their banishments because they could not be ba-
nished from God, and prisons which shut out
friends, because they could not shut out the
Lord. God alone is the happiness of Heaven,
and he that improves his interest in God, be-
gins Heaven in his Soul here on earth.

All the dangers and storms that threaten such,
can put them into no hazard, because God is
the great disposer of all things, their times are
in his hands; and this God, their God in Co-
venant.

3. Stand upon your guard against all trou-
bled thoughts, till you have first examined the
ground of them; thus did *Psalm* 42. *Psal.* 43.
reason the case with himself: *Why art thou cast
down O my Soul, why art thou troubled within me?*

he

he would not let his troubled thoughts pass, till he had first examined them, and called them to an account. Did Christians stand thus upon their watch, they would not be so often surprized with disordinances.

4. Suppress all jealousies about God. Hath God shewn you, and doth he still shew you great and sore troubles; if you can truly call God yours, Question not, he deals with you no otherwise than with Sons, and in the sharpest Providences hath no other design upon you, than your good, and the very worst he means you is your profit.

5. Be serious and frequent in meditation. Meditation is the life of Religion. Meditate on these few Objects.

1. How much better God hath been to you whom he hath owned as his, than to the richest and greatest persons in the world in their carnal estate: Hath he bestowed the world upon others, he hath bestowed himself upon you: are others freed from present troubles, you are freed from everlasting troubles. The most prosperous estate of others is but like fatting for the slaughter; like *Haman's* banquet, which cost him his life: nay, suppose wicked men may spend all their days in mirth, and you in sadness, yet will the scene be strangely changed after this life, *Isa.* 65. 13, 14 compared with Luke 16. 25.

2. Meditate upon the reserves of mercy God hath for his people hereafter; are you now deprived of that Communion you formerly have had with Christian friends, think of what Communion

munion you ſhall have with them hereafter, when you ſhall have Communion with all the Saints that ever lived, and none but Saints with Saints and freed from all infirmities, with Saints in the higheſt imployments of admiring and adoring God; ſuch communion as ſhall never have the leaſt interruption; are you deprived of any opportunities of Communion with God here, meditate upon that Communion you ſhall have with him hereafter: think of theſe things, comfort one another with theſe words.

3. Meditate upon the tendencie of all your afflictions to thoſe bleſſed ends for which God deſigns them; look not upon your afflictions as to their preſent aſpect, that may be grim and guſtly, but as to their effects and fruits, and they are higly encouraging, 2 *Cor.* 4. 8.

4. Meditate upon the ſmalneſs of thoſe evils you undergo, and the greatneſs of thoſe evils you are freed from; you may not perhaps be freed from loſſes, reproaches, pains, weakneſſes, but if you belong to God, you are freed from ſin, from wrath, from hell.

5. Meditate upon the meanneſs of the mercies God with-holds, and the greatneſs of the mercies he affords; if God do not give the bleſſings of his footſtool, yet if he give the bleſſings of his Throne; if he keep open but the upper-ſprings, though he ſhut the nether-ſprings, if he with hold common, and beſtow diſtinguiſhing mercies, we have cauſe for ever to be thankful. *Epheſ.* 1. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath*

blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

SERMON VIII.

Psalm 39. 13.

O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more.

CONsidering how wonderfully God hath spared us from those common calamities which have brought no less than utter ruine and desolation upon the families of others; having spared some of us as to our habitations, our friends, our Creature comforts: Nay, all of us here present as to our lives; that we may be the more affectionately sensible of this kindness of God to us, and more diligently careful to improve it, that neither God may lose the honour of these favours, nor we the benefit and advantage of them; consider the example of *David* here, who looks upon life and all the Comforts of this life, as desirable upon no account so much as this, that he may make some farther progress in Grace and holiness, and that he might by these outward mercies be more inricht with spiritual mercies: He doth not beg here, nor simply desire that he might live, but he begs the continuance of the life of Nature in order to his improve-

provement in the life of Grace: *Oh ſpare me*, ſays he, *that I may recover ſtrength*, &c.

This Pſalme conſiſts partly of Meditation, and partly of Prayer: theſe are the two great duties which are ſo abſolutely neceſſary that the very life and power of all Religion depends upon them. Theſe two duties are like thoſe two Pillars that *Solomon* ſet before the Temple, 2 *Chron.* 3. 17. *Jachim* and *Boaz*, the one was *Eſtabliſhment*, and the other *Strength*.

Theſe Meditations wherein the Pſalmiſt imploys his thoughts were not upon melancholy miſſes, nor ſpeculative fancies, but things and ſubjects moſt ſolemn and ſerious imaginable.

Two things there are between which *David* here divides his meditation, to wit, Time and Eternity: our ſhort abode here, and our everlaſting condition hereafter; and his deſign in both theſe his meditations are ſuch as highly deſerves our imitation. He meditates on time, to the end he might the better improve it; and this in many verſes. He meditates upon Eternity that he might be the better provided for it, and as the ſubjects of his meditations were ſolemn, ſo his management of them was ſerious; for you finde in the 2, 3, and 4*th* verſes, when he was ſo overwhelmed with ſorrow that he was unable to ſpeak to men by way of converſe, yet he ſpeaks to God by way of Prayer, and to his own Soul by way of counſel and advice: and truly thoſe Profeſſors that are not ſerious in theſe weighty matters can be no better than lukewarm. Right Meditations about our eternal Concernments are like Bellows to blow up our

affections and desires into an holy flame.

His Prayer may be reduced to these heads, when once his affections were inflamed he could no longer contain himself, but he gives his affections vent in these Petitions.

1. That he might be throughly affected with his own frailty: that 4, and 5, *vers. Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of my dayes,* &c.

2. That he might be more convinced of the disquietness and folly that accompanies the cares of this world; and that 6th verse, *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew, surely they are disquieted in vain.*

3. That he may come off more fully to God in making him his trust and hope, *ver.* 7. *And now Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee!*

4. That God would deliver him not only from the guilt and disturbance, but from the shame of his former transgressions, *ver.* 8. *Deliver me from all my transgressions, make me not a reproach of the foolish.* Let me not open the mouths of profane persons to cast any thing of infamy upon the ways of God.

5. That God would take off that heavy load of afflictions he had laid upon him, and that 10, and 11th verses. *Remove thy stroke away from me,* &c.

6. That God would afford him his natural strength in order to his obtaining a greater strength in Grace, in the words of the Text, *O spare me, that I may recover strength.*

1. Doct. *How fixt soever our condition may seem to be here in this world, yet we must all give*

2. Doct.

2. Doct. *When we go hence we shall never be any more.*

3. Doct. *That to them that truly understand their own Concernments nothing renders the life of Nature more desirable, than in order to an improvement in the strength of Grace. O spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence.*

He doth not beg that he might live only, but he begs farther time that he might bestow that time on God, and his Soul; here you may consider the Petition it self; *O spare me that I may recover strength*; it is as much as if he had said, Reprieve me for some farther time from the Grave, spin out the thred of my life, and continue me under the opportunities of Grace (that is meant by *spare me*:) that is the design of his Petition; he doth not beg barely that God would but continue him to this end. The Arguments wherewith he backs his Petition are these two.

I am going hence: that is the first.

And *be no more*: that is the second Argument.

I shall begin with the first of these Observations

1. Doctr. *Those of us that seem the most fixed and established in the world must go hence.*

We have here no abiding City; it is implied in this verse: and *David* speaks his mind more clearly in the former verse, *ver.* 12. *I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were*; that is, while he was here on earth. A Learned Writer compares this life to a Stage upon which are several Actors, and every man as he hath

his *Enter* so he must have his *Exit*: As he hath his way whereby he comes into this world, so he must have his way whereby he goes out of it. *Rodolphus Agricola* talking with a Learned man, and being askt what the life of man was; he gave him this description of it: *Shewing himself for a while like a person upon a Stage, and taking a turn or two, and then disappearing again.* We are all going hence (true, some go sooner, and some later) in all life is hastening to its period; and in the days of the year, some are longer, and some shorter, yet every day hath night succeeding it; and when the Sun is down, the whole Sky is over-clouded with darkness; so some there are (as I may so speak) do but even peep into this world, and immediately bid an everlasting farewel to it: others stay yet longer, yet they whose lives are drawn out to the longest period of time, may truly say as *David* doth *verse* 5. *My days are as an hand breadth.* You have many expressions in that verse, *Behold thou hast made my days as an hand breadth, and mine age is nothing unto thee.* This is clear from the Decree of God, *Heb.* 9. 29. *It is appointed for all men once to die.* Though it is true God hath altered the nature of death, yet he doth not exempt his people from dying; because for them not to die is not to be happy; he hath exempted them from the hell of death, but not from the grave of death.

Besides, The brittle materials of which poor bodies consist, frail constitutions; these crazy bodies, these lumps of clay are but like paper-buildings, and decayed rotten houses, that are con-

continually ready to drop upon the ground; all the art in the world cannot long prop them up.

I might add farther from the design of God: God never intended this world for our home. Indeed he sent us into this world as our passage to another. This is our passage, not our portion; it is our journey, our road, but not our Country: God hath reserved better things for all his in another world. This is a truth whereof God hath made the Vision so plain, that he that runs may read it: it is a truth that God is ever sounding in our ears, even by the deceases of our friends and acquaintance; and therefore (mistake me not) I do not now speak to inform you of what you already know, but to put you in minde of what we should have much in our thoughts, and which we are all apt to forget.

1. *Use.* Then certainly the happiness of man doth not consist in this world; we are in this world but as Travellers in our journey, we are now but in our passage; therefore since ere long we must bid an everlasting adieu to all our Creature-comforts, then certainly these things cannot be our happiness: It is an Observation of the *Schoolmen*, *That that wherein our happiness consists must have an essential ingredient in it: there must be a compleat and full satisfaction in the object, and security as to the everlasting fruition of the Object.* Nay, some go many steps higher than this, if there should be the least jealousie in the spirits of just men made perfect, if there should be the least scruple in them of the continuance of that blessed estate, it would take away much of

the happineſs of them that are in Heaven, if there could be any jealouſie of a deprivement and diſpoſſeſſion of thoſe glorious priviledges, ſo far as ſuch doubts are in them of the future continuance of their comforts; ſo far would thoſe comforts be loſt and imperfect. Now it is the priviledge of thoſe Cœleſtial Glori s (though ſometimes in Scripture they are ſtiled ſtreams, and ſtreams at Gods right hand: *Rivers at Gods right hand: (at thy right hand are Rivers of pleaſure.) That they are Rivers of pleaſure for evermore*; that denotes there is a permanencie in them. Truly, that wherein happineſs conſiſts muſt be ſomething greater and higher than all the things of this world, becauſe we are only upon our paſſage going hence. The very ſuppoſal of a future diſpoſſeſſion of happineſs would make happineſs to have much of miſery in it.

2. *Uſe.* Then where are your hearts, upon what are your thoughts, your contrivances, projects engaged? what is that about which you beſtow your ſtrength? your labour, you ſervice are all paſſing hence: Is it only about buying and ſelling and getting gain? Is this your great buſineſs that you may lay up for many years? as that Goſpel-fool ſpeaks, *Luke* 12. *Soul, take thine eaſe, thou haſt goods laid up for many years.* Is it that you may have treaſures on earth? Alas! you are paſſing from hence continually, and what heighth of folly is this? therefore call your ſelves to account, where are your hearts? upon what are your thoughts and contrivances? True, God commands us that we ſhould in thoſe ſtations wherein

wherein his Providence hath ſet us to provide things needful; but alas! we fancie many things needful that are not. It is a rule in morality, That Nature is content with little; and to be ſure Grace is content with leſs: but yet with-all Grace raiſeth up the heart to the greateſt things. If we beſtow our thoughts upon the things of this world, even while we are thinking of them, they are paſſing from us; we deſire that which may be in a moment ſnacht away from us: The ſerious meditation of this would be a notable bridle and check to all our exorbitant extravancies. *Pſal.* 39. *ver.* 6. *Surely every man walketh in a vain ſhew, ſurely they are diſquieted in vain:* It is a hard matter to perſwade the world of this; therefore *David* comes with a *ſurely*; and backs it with a ſecond *ſurely*: If there be a clearneſs in any truth, it muſt be in this, Could we ſit down and ſeriouſly conſider what we have been doing with our thoughts all the time of our lives, we ſhall find we might have made a higher improvement than we have done; how much have we loſt of this our pretious patrimony that God hath left us? whatever we have as to outward things, we muſt leave them; and whatever we have more than is neceſſary, is ſo far from being ſerviceable, that many times it becomes a burden to us: how many are the worſe for the good things of this world, that God is pleaſed to intruſt them with?

2. Doct. *Whenever we go hence we ſhall then be no more.*

Before I go hence and be no more: the meaning

ing is, not as if that Divine ſpark that is in our boſoms ſhould be quite extinguiſhed when we go hence, or that our bodies ſhould find an everlaſting habitation in the Grave. No, the Soul bears a longer date with it, it is immortal, it will run parallel with the longeſt line of Eternity; and as for the body, it ſhall be fetcht back from that pavilion of darkneſs at the general Reſurrection, when all ſhall be cited to make their appearance before the Tribunal of God; the meaning is this, *be no more*; that is, no more as we now are. Perhaps now thou art in divers capacities of being ſerviceable to others, as a Parent, as a Maſter, having an inſpection into thoſe that are under thee: thou ſhalt then be no more under ſuch talents, in ſuch capacities. Now perhaps thou haſt many opportunities not only of advantage for others good, but thine own ſpiritual good too: but then thou ſhalt be no more; no more as to opportunity of Grace. We have now a praying time, and a reading time, a time for meditation and repentance, and for that whole work that God hath appointed us here upon the earth; but when we go hence all theſe preparitory opportunities will ceaſe. Man goes to his long home. *Eccl* 12.3. ſpeaking of old age and decayed nature, which is ſo elegantly deſcribed in the former part of that Chapter, *Man goes to his long home, and the mourners go about the ſtreets* It is called *his long home* (not becauſe time doth linger, or he is long going down to the grave; no time creeps, but it poſts away, even as a ſhadow) becauſe there we come to our fixt and laſting eſtate.

Object.

Object. *But you will say, what is it when man goes to his long home? what doth he then?*

Answ. You have a clear answer for that *Eccles.* 9. 10. *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.* There is no working time then, the voyce of the Gospel is now heard, it cannot be heard in the Grave: you read indeed, that *the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God:* But this is spoken of them that are naturally dead, by a separation of the body from the Soul, but of those that are spiritually dead, by a separation of their Souls and bodies from God: Now, these though they are dead in sin, Christ hath declared he will shew his miraculous power in causing these dead to hear his voice and live: but as to all Gospel and preparitory opportunities they shall be no more.

1. *Use. Informs us* of the sadness of their condition who have unprofitably burnt out their Candle, their Sun is set, and all their work is to do, who have trifled away their time, and yet their sins are to be pardoned, their corruptions subdued, and their assurance cleared. When the day of grace is past, there is no time then for these things: under what dark clouds do those poor Souls sit, even clouds of horrour and despair that will abide upon them to all Eternity? a Stoick said, there is so much vanity in the world, that the first thing desirable is never to be born, and the next thing is to be quickly dead; and truly all those persons must needs be of the same persuasion with him whose Sun is set, and their work not at all done. Truly, such per-

persons change their places when they go hence, but not their dispositions. Did death finde such persons: So will judgment too: Did death find such enemies to the ways of God, carnal profane wretches scoffers at Religion, opposers of Gods people? So will God find them, and accordingly will Judgment proceed against them, there is no agreeing with our adversary, but while we are in the way, *Agree with thine adversary whilst thou art in the way with him.* This life is our passage, our Journey, there is no agreement to be made when we are gone hence. For if when we go hence we go away strangers to God, and at a distance from him, and from Jesus Christ, we must continue so for ever: these are true ordinary Principles which every one sufficiently knows, and they are such as should be much in our thoughts.

How highly are we concerned to improve the present time; we do enjoy to the most and best advantage, in communing with our own hearts; if we shall not do it now, we shall never have time to do it hereafter. We our selves have seen within these few years at what great incertainty God hath left us as to these things, and therefore we should be more industrious and lively in our preparatory endeavours for another world. We have now amending, repenting, reforming seasons, use thm, and make the best advantage you can of them, and that because you know not how soon you may be taken from them.

3. Doctr. *To all such as truly understand their spiritual Concernments, the great thing that renders*

the

the life of Nature desirable, is in order to their improvement in Grace.

Oh spare me, says *David*; remove thy heavy hand from me, spin out the thread of my life, reprieve me a while from the grave; and why? he doth not beg life only that he may live; but oh, prolong my days of nature that I may make an improvement in Grace; that I may recover strength.

In opening this Observation these three things are to be considered.

First, that Grace is our spiritual strength, and that which will hearten and encourage our Souls in their going hence.

Secondly, this spiritual strength is subject to decays, and may be much empaired: *That I may recover strength.*

Thirdly, there is nothing renders the life of Nature desirable in comparison of this, that we may recover our decays in Grace, that we may obtain an improvement in holiness.

First, Grace is our spiritual strength; Grace is not only given us for an Ornament, but for service; God doth not bestow it upon us only as our duty, but as our strength: thus we often find it called in Scripture, the strength of the Soul, *Psal.* 84. 7. *They shall every one of them go from strength to strength*: that is the same which in other places is called *from grace to grace, and from faith to faith*; that is from a less degree to a higher. I might instance in the Church of *Philadelphia*, *Thou hast a little strength*, Rev. 3. 8. that is, there is the reality of Grace, but it is Grace as it was in its infancie; thou hast but a

little

little ſtrength: Indeed where ever there is Grace, there is a proportionableneſs of ſtrength. Inlightening Graces are the ſtrength of the underſtanding; a Soul that is ſpiritually anointed acts ſtrongly in its apprehenſive faculty; ſelf-denying Graces are the ſtrength of the affections, and ſanctifying Graces are the ſtrength of the whole inward man.

But more particularly, there is a three fold ſtrength in Grace.

Firſt, a ſtrength of intereſt as it intitles us to Chriſt.

2. Strength of improvement as Grace grows up to a higher ſtature.

3. A ſtrength of evidence.

1. There is a ſtrength of intereſt by Grace, by which we can claim an intereſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and that is great ſtrength to our Souls when we are going hence and ſhall be no more. If you can ſay Chriſt is yours, then all is yours: life is yours and death is yours, 1 Cor. 3. *laſt, All things are yours.* If once God hath given us his Son, he will with him give us all things: and he that hath given us this Grace will with hold no good thing from us. God will think nothing too much for them upon whom he hath beſtowed his Son; and who are the perſons that have an intereſt in Chriſt? *John* 3. 16. *God ſo loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh but have everlaſting life*: that believeth on him, there is the Grace of faith. There is a time coming when we ſhall ſay to riches and to relations and all Creature-enjoyments, there

was

was a time when you were useful, refreshing, and comfortable, but your time is now past; it is not in you to comfort us, to set open the door of Heaven for us; it is not for you to appear before God on our behalves; it is not in you to deliver us from the evils we now fear, nor to confer upon us the good things which are to be desired. Nothing can hide the Soul from the displeasure of God, nothing can procure it those undeserved favours, and make it compleatly happy but only Christ; but if we have Christ, we have all with him: here is the strength of interest, when the Soul is in want, and to leave all its enjoyments in the world at once (as friends, estate, relations) yet if the Soul hath an interest in Christ, death doth not separate it from Christ; that you have *Rom.* 8. *last. Nor height nor depth, nor life nor death.*

2. There is the strength of improvement: for though weak faith, and weak Grace may hold its own, in God and Christ; yet this hold is not so firm and fast as when Grace is grown up to some stature and hath attained some degree of strength. It is a notable passage of a Learned Writer, *They do but make a great noise in the world about Grace and Christ, that make no improvement in Grace, and are not every day making some further progress in their spiritual interest.* 'Tis true, where-ever there is the least degree of grace there is the mystical union to Jesus Christ, and a communion with Christ in his Graces, for light and heat always come and go together; for when Christ comes into the Soul, he brings along with him these blessings. But yet though

no

no Christian can be any farther in possession of Christ, than he doth make use of him, yet there are several degrees of strength, which by our making use of Christ we may attain unto. To instance in mortification of sins, and the subduing of our corruptions. A Soul that can appropriate Christ will be deriving Conquest from Christ over its inbred corruptions, and power to get Authority over its continued temptations, such a Soul will be crucified to the world, and all the lusts of the flesh; and so as to vivification and newness of life; a Soul that can challenge a propriety in Christ will fetch power not only from his death for the mortification of sin, but also from his Resurrection; for holiness and newness of life and conversation, it will finde living desires and longings and lively stirrings of heart after God continually.

3. There is the strength of evidence or assurance which results from Grace. *That I may recover my strength.* When the Soul by reflecting upon it self, finds that it hath made such improvement by the means of Grace and opportunities it doth enjoy, and that really it hath got an interest in Christ, and sees some Scripture-grounds to reckon it self among those beloved ones, whose names are written in the Book of life; this will fill the Soul with joy here, and bear it up under all pressures and difficulties it may meet with in its passage, this will animate it to look death in the face, and that with comfort. Now these three sorts of strength are so admirably advantageous, will appear from the language of departing Souls when they come to

to lie upon their death-beds; what is it that makes the poor Soul that is ready to take its flight into another world, when it is just going hence and shall be no more, to quake and tremble, but the want of some of these strengths? O says one, If I had but an interest in Jesus Christ, I could say with *Simeon*, Luke 2. 20. *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart:* Death should not then storm me; no, I would then make a quick and speedy surrender of my self to it, then it should not lay siege to me: Says a second, had I more strength of improvement, had I walked more circumspectly, lived more self-denyingly, had I approved my self more faithful in all my Relations, I should then have been more able with the dying Swan to have sung my self asleep in my last bed, as the Naturalist speaks.

Says a third, had I an evidence and an assurance of my relation to Christ; did I certainly know I have an interest in the love of God, then I should welcome death, and say welcome thou Prince of terrours, for though thy face be grim, yet thy message is comfortable, so that it is only spiritual strength, that will bestead the Soul at such a time: and whatever mercy we may be found wanting of, what a mercy will it be to us not to be found wanting of this mercy, this spiritual strength. It is no great matter in what way death comes to us, if it find us with this spiritual strength, in reference to our eternal condition.

2. *Part.* This spiritual strength is subject to many failings and decays.

Our ſtrength as to intereſt (*'tis true*) can not be loſt, for a Soul that is once united to Chriſt is never ſeparated from him again. *My Father* (ſaith our Saviour) *is greater than all, and none can pluck them out of my Fathers hands.* The very innitiative Covenant by which Chriſt eſpouſeth a Soul to himſelf, carries the longeſt date along with it; *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee*: thou art mine, and ſhalt be mine: I do love thee, and I will love thee for ever, *John* 13. 3. *He loved his own to the end, he gives grace, and he will give glory.* But though it is true that cannot be loſt, yet the ſtrength and improvement, and the evidence of this intereſt may be blotted and darkned, it may be intermitted and interrupted; our ſpiritual comforts may be clouded by inbred corruptions breaking in upon the Soul: God may ſuffer the Soul to be foyled and born down for a time; this you ſhall find in the moſt chearful and the moſt improved Chriſtians, and thoſe that have had ſometimes the cleareſt diſcoveries of Gods love to their Souls; what a damp hath ſometimes been upon their Joys? inſomuch that *David* was fain to call himſelf to an account, *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul?* How have even he beſt of Saints many times thought themſelves meer caſt-aways, and ſuch as whom God had forſaken utterly. Indeed to diſcouſe how far a Child of God may go backwards in his Comforts, is a task too large to ſpeak to; but queſtionleſs there may be a great decay in ſpiritual ſtrength, in the ſtrength of improvement; Grace may ſeem to be quite withered and dri-

ed

ed up: *Rev.* 2. 4, 5. The Church of *Epheſus* had *loſt her firſt love*, her flouriſhing, her vigorous love. The Church of *Sardis* ſeemed to be quite dead, at leaſt ready to die, *Rev.* 3. 1. *Thou haſt a name to live, but art dead*, as to outward appearance. We ſay a real Chriſtian can never be under ſuch a deprivation of all kind of ſpiritual life and ſenſe, he may be ſo as to others; he may have no ſymptoms of ſpiritual life left, yet there may be ſome ſtruglings for life remaining.

And as for Aſſurance they may be brought ſo low as to be upon the very brink of deſpair, yet they can neither fall totally, nor finally: how ſhould this make us to walk humbly, for if once we begin to be tickled with ſpiritual pride, concerning any ſpiritual improvement, becauſe we outſtrip others, God can quickly ſuffer us to fall into the common level with the meaneſt Chriſtian.

As Grace is our ſpiritual ſtrength, and this is ſubject to decays and declinations: ſo thirdly, the great thing that ſuch as rightly underſtand themſelves that renders the life of nature deſirable to them, it is in order to their improvement in this ſpiritual ſtrength.

O ſpare me: Why? *that I may recover ſtrength.* He doth not ſay, that I may obtain riches and worldly greatneſs, and compaſs great matters for my ſelf in theſe outward things, but that I may recover my ſtrength.

The life of nature is in it ſelf the higheſt of outward mercies (for all other mercies are but as ſo many Cyphers without it) if it were not

for life, we were not capable of enjoying them: hence it is as *Solomon* speaks, *A living Dog is better than a dead Lyon:* when Death comes, it puts us in an utter incapacity of partaking of any refreshment from these outward comforts; therefore it is the Devil said to *Job*, *Skin for skin and all that a man hath will he give for his life.* It was a truth though from the father of lyes; now though it be in it self a very desirable thing, yet that which makes it more desirable is in order to this spiritual improvement. How sad must needs be the condition of such who only live here to the gratifying of their senses: the longer we live, the more we shall encrease our score, and the more guilty we shall make our selves. Certainly we are to live to better purpose. Nor can we be said more truly to live then when our Souls do most thrive and flourish in Grace. The Heathens themselves thought that meerly to breath, to eat and drink, and converse with men, and to have a being in this world as men, was not worthy the name of living; and therefore they made a distinction between being and living; and others have been said to be in the world, and to pass a little time in the world, but not to live: not to live well, is a kind of dying, a life below the life of a Christian.

Applic. Then what cause have we to be thankful- you see Grace is our strength; it is that by which we lay hold on Christ, and God who is our strength; and it is our improvement in Grace that makes our evidences more clear and apparent: then if this be the great busi-

ness

neſs to make life deſirable, our improvement in Grace; then remember for what purpoſe you came into this world, God hath not given you lives only that you may live as thoſe Epicureans, becauſe they had but a little time to live, therefore they will make as much of it as they can; becauſe they had ſo little a time to live in the world to enjoy the comforts of it, therefore they would take their fill of them. *Come let us eat and drink for to morrow we ſhall die*: ſhould we make this uſe of all Gods forbearance of us, when God hath ſwept away thouſands by the deſtroying peſtilence? and when the arrows of God have flown ſo thick about us? when ſeveral have faln on our right hands and on our left, ſhal we make this the end of the goodnes of God in ſparing us? becauſe more time is given us, therefore we will give our luſts their ſwing? this would be very ſad and a ſore evidence againſt us: though God hath ſpared us, yet if we do ſo, our deliverances are not deliverances but reprivals: it is one thing to be delivered from a calamity, and another thing to be reprieved, to be ſpared for a time that God may puniſh us more ſeverely hereafter: and if we conſider in thoſe deſtroying flames that have laid waſte the habitations of others, that any of ours have been preſerved, ſhall we make no better uſe of it than thus? when God hath under ſo many ſeveral judgments ſhewed that kindneſs to us which he promiſed to *Ebed Melech*, *Jerem.* 39. 18. Notwithſtanding when he had threatned all thoſe miſeries againſt them, *I will ſurely deliver thee, becauſe thou haſt put thy truſt in me, ſaith the*

Lord. God doth not know how to caſt off them that caſt themſelves upon him. Thou haſt repoſed thy truſt in me, and I will be faithful to that truſt; I will do it for thee. But our care ſhould be to improve our time to the utmoſt, we have but a little time to be here, *and when we go hence we ſhall be no more.* That is, no more to preparatory opportunities, and in this lies our greateſt concerns: conſider the ſadneſs of their condition, who go hence in their ſins; they do at once leave all their comfort, and they exchange comforts for ſorrows: how can theſe perſons go hence in their ſins and look Chriſt in the face with any kind of countenaace? how can they attain to the inheritance of the Saints in light? they can look for nothing for their portion but wrath, eternal wrath: could we but lay our ears to liſten to thoſe Souls that are now bemoaning the loſs of their time, thoſe that have enjoyed repenting ſeaſons, and peace-making ſeaſons, but now never ſhall be more; how ſhould we hear them bewailing their folly: it is true, a time was when we might have obtained a pardon, and a peace might have been made for our Souls, we might have obtained the love of God, but we then would not: how often did Chriſt ſpeak to theſe Souls as he did to *Jeruſalem, How often would I have gathered thee as a hen her chickens under her wings, but ye would not, but now behold thy houſe is left unto thee deſolate. Oh! that thou hadſt known in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace:* never to enjoy opportunity more, ſhould inhance our eſtimation of this rich mercy. That God (though he hath

hath perhaps taken away thy great eſtate, and thy outward comforts) hath ſpared your lives, and lengthened out opportunities of getting our peace made, and recovering our ſtrength before we go hence and be no more.

Conſider how often we have deſerved to be cut ſhort of theſe opportunities, and turned in-hell for our ſins.

Then ſtudie the excellencie of time, we ſquander it away not conſidering what a pretious Jewel time is; it is a golden ſtream, gliding down from one Eternity to another. Nay, it is ſuch a precious thing, that when once it is gone, all the Gold of *Ophir* cannot call it back again; it is that without wch we can do nothing; and ſhall we do nothing with it while we have it? the very *Heathen* could complain of themſelves for their miſpence of time. *Seneca* hath this paſſage, *We are very prodigal of our time*, and there is nothing about which we can be honeſtly covetous but only for the well managing of that. And therefore let us be much in being more ſerious in the buſineſs of our ſouls, if God ſpare us time. Let us devote much of our time in community with our ſelves. It was a complaint of *Auguſtus the Roman Emperor, That the buſineſſes of the Empire were ſo many, and took up ſo much of his time, that he could never be at leiſure for himſelf.* Be often at leaſure with your own Souls to talk with your Conſciences, and ſee how it ſtands between God and you: be careful to obſerve reading ſeaſons, and praying ſeaſons, and meditating upon the word of God.

Remember we are all going hence and ſhall be no more; and the only thing that we can deſire our continuance for here, is this; for other things *Solomon* pronounceth vanity and vexation to be in them, as if there were more bitterneſs in them than any real comfort.

Friends, now is the time of gathering *Manna*, now is the heavenly *Market* wherein ſpiritual commodities muſt be bought before the Market be ended: In the harveſt we gather the fruits of the earth. Now if Mercy be in good earneſt ſought for, it will not be with-held, and our labour ſhall not be loſt.

And then as we ſhould do this in reſpect of our ſelves, ſo alſo in reſpect of others; let us be doing as much good as we can in our places by reproving others ſins, by our holy lives, and contrary converſations, and by doing what we can on their behalfs by our prayers. God beſtows our time upon us as Talents, and is it not fit our time ſhould be laid out for the ſervice of our Maſter? If we can be laborious in working while it is day, this will make our ſleep comfortable to us when the great night of death comes: and if we labour now in the Lord, be ſure we ſhall die in the Lord; and, *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they reſt from their labours, and their works follow them.*

SERMON

SERMON IX.

2 Tim. 2. 19.

And let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity.

THis Chapter, and indeed this whole Epistle, consists of nothing almost but directions to *Timothy* how he should carry himself in the discharge of that great Office of an Evangelist; there are several things the Apostle speaks by way of counsel, and several things by way of caution.

There are two things especially which St. *Paul* gives advice to *Timothy* in, and it is very observable that whatever advice he giveth him as an Evangelist, who was to preach the Gospel, he gives us who profess subjection to the Gospel: they were the truths he chargeth him to acquaint others with, and therefore they are truths that we are especially obliged to take notice of, as being of concernment to us.

Here are two things that he would have *Timothy* careful to warn others of:

The one is, of such kind of Professors, *Who as concerning the Faith had erred.*

The

The other is, of such, who (though they retained the Doctrinal part of faith, they had not forsaken the truths) yet they did not live up to those truths in their conversations: You read in *ver.* 17. of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus, who erred concerning the faith*; and their great errour was that they thought the Resurrection was already past, and by this means *overthrew the faith of some*; they thought there was no other Resurrection, but that from a state of sin, to a state of Grace: but now, says he, though this be their mistake, and a dangerous error, yet the foundation *of God standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth who are his*: their infection is of a spreading nature, *it eats as doth a canker*: but yet says he, let not this startle others; for though these errors, these fundamental errors take away the thoughts of the Resurrection and of another world, and destroy the foundation of Religion (as the Learned *Morella* observes) take away the thoughts of immortal Souls, and an eternal estate, and then farewel all serious Religion in the World: *yet the foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth who are his.* ver. 19. it is as much as if St. *Paul* had spoke, as he doth *Rom.* 11. *Though the number of Israel were as the sand upon the Sea shore, yet but a small remnant shall be saved*; *yet* (saith he) *the Election have obtained*: *what if some fell off, and were rejected, yet the Election of God stands fast.* It is compared here to a foundation, the firmest part of the building, and that upon which the whole superstructure stands; and it is said to stand sure, because it *hath this Seal, the Lord knoweth*

who

who are his : The Lord out of mercy takes a fatherly care of them, and commits them to the charge of his Son : *My Father* (ſaith Chriſt) *is greater than all, and none can pluck his ſheep out of his hands.*

Here is another ſort of errors, and that is in point of practice (as a Learned Writer obſerves) *There are heretical Manners as well as Doctrines*; and men may be heretical in their lives, as well as in their Opinions : to theſe the Apoſtle gives advice here in the Text, that he ſhould charge *every one that names the Name of Chriſt to depart from iniquity*. How many are there that reſt ſatisfied with a *form of Godlineſs, but deny the power of it* ; theſe are the perſons whom St. *Paul* gives *Timothy* advice here, that he ſhould labour to redeem from thoſe formalities in which they reſted, that they ſhould not think it enough to name the Name of Chriſt, but they ſhould expreſs their ſincerity therein by departing from iniquity.

In the words you have theſe two particulars.

1. The perſons to whom this advice is given ; that is, to ſuch as name the Name of Chriſt.

I ſhall ſhew you how it is uſed (briefly) in the Scripture.

There is a naming of the Name of Chriſt by profeſſion ; they that own the Truths and Principles of Religion ; they that profeſs the Doctrines which our Saviour hath revealed in the Goſpel : *Micha* 4. 5. it is ſpoken there of two ſorts of perſons, of thoſe that worſhip falſe gods,

gods, and of those that worship the true God; *For all the people, every one will walk in the Name of his God*; that is, they own those Rules, and acknowledge those Principles: *and we will walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever*. This is a naming of Christ by way of profession.

2. There is a naming of Christ in all the duties of Religion: as in our Prayers, *Whatever you ask in my Name of the Father, he will give it*: in our duties all must be offered up in his Name: *God hath given him a Name above every Name, above all things in heaven and earth, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow*; that is, in prayer. Now in the former sense, the naming the Name of Christ by profession is to be taken in opposition to Heathens, who name the Name of other gods: *Pour out thy wrath upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy Name*, Psal. 79. 6.

3. There is a naming the Name of Christ in our Vows and Covenants; and thus in our Baptism we vow to become his; and hence it is, that we are said *to baptized in the Name of Christ*, which doth not only imply a desire to partake of those priviledges which Christ hath purchased, but an obligation which we lay upon our selves to own him as our Lord, and to submit to all his Commands, and to be guided by his Will and Laws, *Acts* 19. 5. *They were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus*.

4. There is a naming the Name of Christ in our expectations and hopes, when we build all our confidence upon him alone. *The desires of our Souls are to thee, and to the Remembrance of thy*

thy Name. We look for no other mercy but what the Lord gives, and no other help but what he vouchsafes: these are the persons to whom St. *Paul* gives this advice.

Secondly, Here is the advice and counsel itself, Let all such persons depart from iniquity: the Word in the Greek is, Ἀποστήτω, let him be an Apostate from sin, and Satan. When *Luther* was challenged by the Jesuites for being an Apostate, because he had renounced his old Principles (says he) I confess I am, but it is from the Devil. Such an Apostacie is no reproach to a person; nay, such is of absolute necessity; for we are all by nature servants to sin and in subjection to Satan. Now, *let him depart from iniquity*; depart from the practice of it, and from the love of it, and as much as he can from any inclination to it: you can never reconcile the profession of Christ, and the practice of sin together, that is the meaning of the Apostle, doest thou name the Name of Christ, and go on in sin? Your lives are a contradiction to your profession. *Let every one that names, &c. depart from iniquity.* But then observe the extent here, *let every one*, not only those that so name the Name of Christ, as having the Doctrine of Christ committed especially to them to communicate to other; (thus we read of naming the Name of Christ, *they taught in his Name*) but it is meant of all that profess the Name of Christ, let every one in any way, though he be but in a way of outward profession only, let him make it his designe to depart from inquity.

The

The Observation is this.

Doct. *There are special obligations upon all to depart from iniquity, who name the Name of Christ.*

I shall spak to these two heads in opening the Doctrinal part.

1. That here are great ingagements upon all men to depart from iniquity; this I shall prove from these Arguments.

1. The first may from the nature of sin; what is sin but our disease, our burden, and that which endangers our utter ruine: should men be in love with poyson? Should men hug that viper that will sting them to death? the right knowledge of sin doth sufficiently evidence this: now what is sin? It is a transgression of Gods Law; it is a trampling upon Gods Authority, it is a refusing him to rule over us, it is a making God our enemy, it is a daring of him in the open field: Do you provoke the Lord to anger? are you stronger than he? dare you enter the lists with the great God? you will pity those distracted persons that labour for their own ruine, and would hasten their own death by some kind of violence or other, this is the practice of every sinner.

2. In respect of God that obligation that lies upon all sorts of persons to have more reverend and high thoughts of God then to slight his Laws; we are all his Creatures, we owe our very beings to him; it is God that made us, we are his Creatures, and the workmanship of his hands; God may very well expect those beings which he hath given us, should be imploy-

ed

for him. Shall a man plant a Vineyard and not eat of the fruit thereof? If God hath made us men, and beſtowed natural endowments upon us, and hath put us into a capacity for his ſervice, may not God reaſonably expect that he ſhould receive the fruit of all his charges and pains? upon this account it was that God was ſo much offended with his antient people for all the kindneſs he had ſhewed to them (ſays he) *When I looked for grapes behold they brought forth wild grapes*: I have made you capable of my ſervice, will you imploy your ſelves in the ſervice of other Maſters? your beings you have received from me, is it not reaſonable they ſhould be imployed to his Glory, ſince they have been received from his bounty?

Again, in reſpect of Gods continuance and preſervation of our beings, this is from him. Alas! ſhould not God ſupport us every moment, we ſhould ſink into our firſt nothing. *Heb.* 1. *Upholding all things by things by the Word of his power*, it was God that firſt breathed life into us, and it is God that keeps our breath in our noſtrils, we ſhould otherwiſe every moment be breathing out our laſt: have we received our beings from him, and do we ſtill live upon him? then there is all the obligation upon us that can be, that we ſhould have reverend thoughts of God, and not deſpiſe nor contemn him, nor prefer other things above him.

Beſides, all our ſupplies are from God, it is God that furniſheth us with all our comforts that we enjoy: thoſe refreſhments that others want, and with thoſe mercies that others are denied,

denied, all this is from the goodneſs of God: and conſider how it fares with others, and how much better it is with you than it is with them that are your betters, and certainly there is very great reaſon upon this account that we ſhould not thus ſlight him, but depart from every thing that is offenſive to him.

Nay, conſider not only all our ſupplies for the preſent, but all our hopes for the future are this God. Haſt thou any hopes of Heaven and happineſs in another world? haſt thou any right to, or any hopes of eternal bleſſedneſs? all is built upon the goodneſs of God, in and through Chriſt.

Nay, all our hopes of ſpiritual mercies even in this world are in God: Do you now complain of hardneſs of heart, of Soul diſtempers? it is only God that can be your Phyſitian. Alas! means are nothing, and inſtruments are nothing, unleſs God owns them.

3. In reſpect of the welfare of our own Souls; there is nothing but iniquity can make us hateful in the ſight of God. Our afflictions, and outward miſeries cannot: theſe may be many times the effects of Gods diſpleaſure, but never the cauſe of his diſpleaſure; there is nothing can render us hateful to God but only ſin: God is angry with nothing but ſin: now if we would eſcape the wrath of God, we muſt keep our ſelves from all ſin, we muſt depart from iniquity, *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael*, Ezek. 18. 27, 30. if you will go on in ſin, if you will not depart from iniquity, there is nothing to be expected but death, hell, and wrath.

wrath. You can never look that God ſhould be a friend to you, while you continue an enemy to him; you can never expect that he ſhould be reconciled to you on his part, whilſt you will not be reconciled to him on your part; if ſinners will have their will againſt God, God will have his will upon them. There is no other way to be free from this curſe in all conditions, but by departing from iniquity; for we make every condition a curſe when we mix iniquity with it; our comforts then are ſtumbling-blocks, our enjoyments then are ſnares and temptations whilſt we have a ſinful nature; but they highly encreaſe our guilt, when we abuſe theſe by ſin, and unleſs we depart from iniquity all the mercies that we enjoy, outward mercies, and ſpiritual mercies are overſpread with a curſe.

2. There are ſpecial engagements that lie upon them that name the Name of Chriſt to depart from iniquity.

1. Thoſe that name the name of Chriſt only in profeſſion & appearance, muſt not take the name of Chriſt in vain; God hath expreſly ſaid, *He will not hold them guiltleſs that take his Name in vain*. Now this is a taking the Name of God and Chriſt in vain, in allowing our ſelves in any kind of iniquity; this is clear from the Prayer of *Agur*, *Pro.* 30. 9. he prays there againſt extremity in both conditions, he would neither have too much nor too little of this world, he prays againſt fulneſs, *Leſt I be full & deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord*; *or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the Name of my God in vain*; that is, leſt I take any irregular courſes for the ſupplies of my

neceſſity, leſt I take thy Name in vain. While we allow our ſelves in any kind of ſin, we do but take the Name of God in vain, notwithſtanding all our profeſſion; but this is not all: *Rom.* 2. 24. you read of an higher expreſſion than this; *For your ſakes*, or, *by your means*, or, reaſon of your practice *the Name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you: for Circumciſion verily profiteth if thou keep the Law, but if thou be a breaker of the Law, thy Circumciſion is made uncircumciſion.* Here the engagements laid upon them that profeſs Gods Name, becauſe he hath given them ſo much knowledge to underſtand the great Myſteries of Salvation, and acquainted them with thoſe Principles that are of abſolute neceſſity to underſtand their own eternal good, and for them to break thoſe engagements, is but to take Gods Name in vain; nay, it is to blaſpheme his Name amongſt them that are ſtrangers to him.

But for them that name the Name of Chriſt in ſincerity, there are ſpecial obligations God hath laid upon them, there are ſingular engagements from God upon them, and obligations from them unto God that oblige them to depart from iniquity.

1. There are ſingular engagements that God hath laid upon them to depart from iniquity, as

Firſt, not only vouchſafeing them the means of Grace, but in accompanying thoſe means with the efficacious concurrence of his Spirit. How many parts of the world live without any knowledge of the true God at all? it is a mer-

cy

cy therefore to enjoy the means of knowledge, yea, it is a great mercy that the Pſalmiſt highly values, *Thou haſt not dealt ſo with every Nation, as for his Judgments they have not known them*, Pſal. 147. 20. and how many thouſands are there that live under the Goſpel, to whom it is no more than a dead Letter; they hear the noiſe, or ſound of the Goſpel, but it makes little impreſſion upon their hearts. Now on all thoſe that do profeſs the Name of Chriſt, there is a ſpecial obligation upon them, becauſe of the great things that God hath done for them. Conſider what Chriſt hath done for thee; hath Chriſt broken off the yoke of Satan? and wilt thou put it on again? hath he taken off thy burdens, and cured the Diſeaſes? and art thou fond of thy burdens, and in love with thy Diſeaſes? hath he ſet thee at liberty, hath his Spirit made thee free? (and ſuch are free indeed) and wilt thou again become entangled?

Again, hath Chriſt waſhed away thy filth by his blood, and wilt thou return again like the Sow that is waſhed to wallow in thy former mire? hath he taken off the guilt of thy ſin? and wilt thou run upon a new ſcore, is this ſutable to the engagements that lie upon thee? Conſider if thou art one that doth relie upon Chriſt, there lies an high Obligation upon thee on that account: hath he redeemed thy poor captive Soul out of the hands of that grand Uſuper, and Tyrant? and wilt thou become like one of thoſe ſervants that would have his ear bored, and become a ſervant while he lived to his old Maſter? this is to deſpiſe the kindneſs of Chriſt,

is to undervalue the bleſſing of the Goſpel. Hath Chriſt taken thee into his care and ſervice? and wilt thou not be guided by his rules? but what are the rules of Chriſt in reſpect of God? that we ſhould not only ſerve him, but ſerve him from a Principle of love; it is not enough that we bring our bodies to God in every duty, but that we alſo bring our hearts unto him; this is that which our Saviour expects: He tells us, *God is a Spirit*, John 4. 24. *and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and Truth: bodily ſervice profiteth nothing.* Alas! men may be much in outſide duties and ſervices, and yet at laſt be rejected with ſcorn to their great grief, unleſs they be ſerious. That heed that what you do, you do not againſt Chriſts Rules, that you do not refuſe his directions and Councels; thoſe that are acquainted with thoſe rules there lies a ſpecial obligation upon them to obſerve them: hath Chriſt taken the care of you himſelf, and will you not live up to this kindneſs? this is not to anſwer your ingagements.

Again, I might ſhew you the great privileges which all the true Members of Chriſt do partake of, he hath ſent his Spirit to be their guide, his Spirit of Truth to lead them into all Truth; the Spirit to enlighten the Soul, to purge, refine, and ſanctifie the Soul; to excite, aſſiſt, ſtrengthen and preſerve the weak beginnings of Grace; to guide and conduct the Soul into farther improvements; and to witneſs to the comforts of God: and will you contradict theſe Principles of Divine Grace? God hath ſent his Spirit to

guide

guide you, that is, to keep you from miſtakes, to prevent your miſcarriage, and will you yet go on in iniquity? The great deſign of God in ſending his Son, and of his Son in ſending his Spirit, was not only to redeem his people from hell and wrath, but from ſin and Satan, *and to make them a peculiar people to himſelf, zealous of good works*: now what ingratitude is this to croſs theſe deſigns of mercy. Alas! God cannot be the better for us. I ſpeak now to ſuch as think that they do in ſincerity name the Name of Chriſt ſo as to depart from iniquity: for be ſure of this, that there is no poſſibility of reconciling two ſuch contrary enemies as Chriſt and ſin; for he came into the world on this very errand to deſtroy the works of the Devil; and this is your work to oppoſe the Devil and ſin.

2. The ſpecial obligations that they have laid upon themſelves by their Covenants and Promiſes: they that do aright name the Name of Chriſt have ſolemnly devoted themſelves to Chriſt not only in their baptiſmal Vows, but in reiterated Covenants; now will you revoke them? is this ſutable to thoſe engagements to break your word with God and to have your own promiſes to witneſs againſt you? you that have owned his yoke as eaſie, and ſubmitted to his ways as deſirable; and made profeſſion of theſe, will you contradict all in your lives and converſations? truly, this is too ordinary in the world: St. *Paul Titus* 1. 16. doth very much lament ſome, *who in their words profeſs the Name of Chriſt, but in their works deny him.* Verbal Profeſſions are eaſie; but practical Profeſſions,

thoſe that God looks for, he is the beſt Chriſtian, not that can talk moſt, but live beſt, and keep himſelf moſt unſpotted from the pollutions of the world; now remember the Vows that you made with God, and conſider the engagements that lie upon you from thence to have a tender regard of Gods glory: every iniquity is a contempt of God, it is a rejecting of God from ruling over us; it is a diſparagement to his Goſpel, as if we thought we could ſpend our time better than in his ſervice, as if we could live to better purpoſe than in minding thoſe duties that he requires of us. *David* was of another mind, *Pſal.* 73. laſt. *It is good for me to draw near to God.* Pſal. 84. *A day in thy Courts is better than a thouſand.* But what a reproach do you caſt upon God and his wayes, in that you ſee and fancie ſomething in ſin that you think worthy the making God your enemy for; though you part with God, and loſe his favour, yet you think there is ſomething in ſin that will recompenſe that loſs: every ſinner doth ſo, that allows himſelf in any ſin. Truly, though God is gratious to us in affording us the liberty of approaching his preſence, yet while we allow our ſelves in any ſin, all our duties are but loſt labour, and to very little purpoſe, and we can expect no other anſwer from God, than we have in *Pſal.* 50. *What haſt thou to do to declare my Statutes? or that thou ſhouldeſt take my Name in thy mouth?* What was the matter? *Seeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteſt my word behind thy back.* While men allow themſelves in any ſin, all their duties are to no purpoſe. Conſider how much more

more God hath shewed of kindness to you than others, and consider how many engagements are upon you beyond what are upon others; certainly from both these, God cannot but have higher expectations from you, than any; and will you thus requite the Lord? or will you say as the people of Israel did when they were brought out of *Egypt*, and met with streights and difficulties in the Wilderness? *Would to God we had died in Egypt, was there not graves enough there?* So while you live under the temptations and snares of an evil world, will you look on on these things as lovely, and deserving to be fond of them? Christ came to redeem you from them, and you have accepted of that redemption, and you have bound your selves by your Oathes and Seals; and how sad will it be if those Seals do witness to your Condemnation, both on Christs part, and on your own part? Christ will say one day, These are the persons whom I have proffered Salvation to, and they did seem to accept of it, and to close with it; but they have cast off all, and forsaken all those designs of mercy that I had to their Souls; and what can they now look for but wrath and destruction. And so I have gone over the Doctrinal part of the Observation.

The first Use may be to awaken and startle Professors, that though they do name the Name of Christ, yet there is so much of iniquity allowed of, and connived at by them: we can never own Christ, till we fall off from sin and Satan: While we close with a contrary party, we cannot approve our selves faithful to him:

there are but two parties in all the world, Christ and the Devil; now shall we pretend to Christ, and wear his Colours, and take his Livery upon us, and call our selves his Subjects, and yet allow our selves in the service of sin and Satan? Let our Profession be never so high, yet if we do so, this is one word to unsay all, and to contradict all again. This I say therefore, may sharply reprove all careless Professors that lay aside their watch, and do not always stand upon their guard to keep off every thing of sin. You know how much Christ hath deserved from us; shall I little minde you in two or three hints.

Consider how much he hath done and suffered for all that belong to him; he thought no blessings too great to leave (even such blessings as none but himself was ever capable of) for no Creature could be capable of those high and eminent priviledges that he left, that he might become our Redeemer; and as there was no mercy that he thought too great to leave, so there was no misery that he thought too sharp to undergo, that the wrath of God his Father (whose love to him was more worth than millions of worlds) might be appeased, and in order to the Redemption of poor lost Creatures, he was willing to bear it, *Lo, I come, in the Volumne of thy Book, it is written of me, I delight to do thy will; Oh my God; yea, thy Law is within my heart.* Thus do but consider what the Glory was that he left, and what that misery was he underwent, & that chearfulness with wch he did both, & his design in all these, which was only to redeem poor lost Creatures (as for himself, he could

could be no gainer, as appears by what he said, *John* 17. 4. *Father, Glorifie thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*; and certainly it cannot but command of thee the greatest exactness and circumspection of thy life. Doest thou name the Name of Christ? Doest thou own these condescentions of Christ? and canst thou allow thy self in any kind of iniquity? it was iniquity that was the *Judas* that betrayed him, the *Pilate* that condemned him; it was not those instruments, but our sins, and will you yet harbour those sins? is this an ingenious requital of so much love? all the malice of Hell, and all the rage of adversaries here upon earth; all the contrivances of the Jews with their great ones together could never have brought those sufferings upon Christ (had it not been for his love that he bore to his people) and will you for all this, after he hath done, and suffered so much, trample on his blood, and slight his kindness, and resolve on your own ruine? and in spite of such mercies and kindness, will you go on to your own destruction? is not this sad? what shame should be to all professing Christians that do not stand upon their watch, and do what they can, and make it in good earnest their business to keep themselves from all iniquity.

The next Use, and the only Use which I shall add further is, by way of exhortation, that all that hath been said may prevail thus far with you, to get your hearts at as great a distance from sin as possibly you are able; never think that you are too strange to it, nor at a distance

ſtance enough from it: your profeſſions oblige you, your engagements oblige you; conſider, ſhould you allow your ſelves in any ſin, you thereby deſpiſe the richeſt mercy that ever was vouchſafed to poor Creatures: you that profeſs the Name of Chriſt, you that know what deſign Chriſt came into the world; follow the example of thoſe worthies, *Hebr.* 11. 37, 38. *they were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder,* &c. and its ſaid *ver.* 35. *they accepted not of deliverance:* You ſee how ſhie they were of ſin, and at how great a diſtance they kept from it, and what was their thoughts of it: Oh! let it be your practice. *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. *He that deſpiſed Moſes Law died without mercy under two or three witneſſes: of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God,* &c. It is a common thing to ſlight it, and to ſcorn it: but what doth the Apoſtle ſay to ſuch: *ver.* 30. *We know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord; and again, the Lord ſhall judge his people.* They that profeſs themſelves his people, muſt be all brought to the teſt and tryal. Do you think it nothing to deſpiſe the very patience of God? to deſpiſe the choiſeſt mercy of God? take it, Friends, for a ſad truth (I ſpeak it only to awaken both my ſelf and you) there is no ſinner like unto a Goſpel ſinner, to them that go on in ſin, under thoſe means that ſhould recover them from ſin: and therefore in the day of account you read that no ſinner, ſhall have ſuch tremblings, and aſtoniſhings upon them as ſinners: *Sinners in Sion ſhall*

be afraid, and fearfulneſs ſhall ſurpriſe the hypocrite: Sion ſinners, Sabbath-days, Sacrament-ſinners, they that live under all thoſe opportunities and advantages (as their ſins bring greater diſhonour to God) bring greater damage to their own Souls than other ſins do: theſe of all perſons are the fartheſt off from being renewed again by repentance. *Pro.* 8. *laſt.* it is ſaid in general of all kind of ſinners, *He that ſins againſt me wrongs his own Soul*; he cannot wrong God (he does indeed, what in him lies, and God may account himſelf wronged by his ſin) really injure God he cannot; our ſervices and ſins reach not him, God is infinitely above both; but he wrongs himſelf; he may wrong others by his bad example, but eſpecially he wrongs himſelf, not only in reſpect of worldly things, but he wrongs himſelf in the higheſt degree, as *Solomon* there expreſſeth it, *he wrongs his own Soul*: he doth not only wrong himſelf as to outward comforts, but as to his great concernments, as to his everlaſting welfare. Alas! how many be the Judgments God hath to meet with all the contemners of his mercy in this world? Outward Judgments, and ſpiritual Judgments, and then conſider the Judgments of God in another world; and certainly of all perſons, thoſe that profeſs the Name of Chriſt ſhall have the foreſt; it ſhall be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon* in the day of Judgment than for *Jeruſalem* that had the Goſpel and Ordinances of God, and ſuch priviledges, and means, and helps.

Let all that hath been ſaid, perſwade you to

a ſtrickt examination of your hearts and lives; that what hath been amiſs may be both ſpeedily and throughly reformed. If you do not depart from all iniquity, how ſad a thing will it be to you, when once Jeſus Chriſt riſeth up in Judgment againſt you? what will you plead for your ſelves, when that once Chriſt ſhall plead againſt you? even you that have deſpiſed his mercy, and refuſed Salvation, and have choſen death, and thoſe things that tend thereunto.

SERMON

SERMON X.

Romans 8. laſt verſe,

Nor heighth. nor depth, nor any other Creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

The whole Paragraph runs thus, *For I am perſwaded that neither death nor life,* &c. *ver.* 38, 39.

THeſe words are a part of St. *Pauls Triumph*: and the evils over which he triumphs, are no leſs than all thoſe that might either *endanger the welfare or diſturb the peace and quiet of the people of God.* In the Chapter before, you find him in his conflict, ſtriving with many doubts and Objections: In this Chapter you find his *Faith in its elevation*, as you may find in the 35 verſe, *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or diſtreſs, perſecution or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword*; Nay, ſays he in verſe 37. *In all theſe things we are more than Conquerors.* And in this verſe St. *Paul* ſeems to make a kind of Challenge to all kind of evils to

do

do their worſt, and utmoſt ; he bids defiance to them ; but it is very obſervable, that all this confidence, which appeared in this great Apoſtle, was not upon the account of any thing in himſelf, but only upon the account of the love of God, and the aſſurance he had of his intereſt therein : as *David* when he went with ſo much confidence againſt *Goliah*, it was not in any ſtrength of his own, but becauſe he went in the Name of the Lord of Hoſts, whoſe Army that proud perſon had defied. Thus it was with the Apoſtle *Paul* here : And though in every Epiſtle written by this great Apoſtle, we find him ſpeaking as becomes an Apoſtle, a perſon ſo extraordinarily gifted, and called; yet in this Chapter (as a Writer obſerves) St. *Paul* ſpeaks as if he was now raiſed up to the third Heaven, he ſpake ſuch great and mighty things, as were enough to poſe a weak and ordinary faith ; as in his other writings he ſeems to be *above others*, ſo here he ſeems to be *above himſelf*, in reſpect of what he was at other times ; he now ſoars aloft, now anſwers all his Objections. In this Triumph, here are theſe four things remarkable.

1. A large *Catalogue*, or enumeration of the *ſeveral troubles* that may endanger the ſafety of the people of God, and a ſeparation from the love of God ; and theſe he lays down chiefly in the verſe before the Text : *Neither death, nor yet life*, &c. The firſt is *death* ; death ſeems to be a thing of all things the moſt formidable; its called the *King of Terrors*, its the moſt dreadful thing to nature ; but becauſe, after the Apoſtle

postle had mentioned several particulars in the verse before, and in this, lest he should leave room for any Objection, that might gravel any poor doubting soul, he puts in *Any other Creature* nor this nor that, nor any thing; St. *Paul* does here like the wise King spoken of in *Luke* 14. 31. in the Parable, *Or what King among you, that goeth about to wage war against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand.* St. *Paul* here *computes all the troubles*; he reckons the summ total of all the oppositions that Christians can meet with in this world, and yet he sees nothing discouraging in all these: that's the first particular; *a large Catalogue*, &c. For while he says, these things cannot separate from the love of God, he strongly implies thus much, that those that are the objects of the love of God, are yet liable unto these things.

2. Here is the *utter inability* of all these things *to cause any distance* between God, and any truly gracious Soul. These things may separate us from Friends, from Relations, from what is dear to us in this world, but *not* from the love of God. Alas! what breaches is God continually making upon every one of us in every part of our lives? but such is the union between God and every sincere believer, that nothing can make a separation here: God may be offended with his people, but nothing can separate between God and his people; death cannot do it, yet death can separate us from all our Creature-comforts, from all our dearest friends; yea, it may

may ſeparate the very Soul and body, and yet it cannot ſeparate from the love of God.

God hath ſuch reſpect to the *Souls* of his people, that *precious in the ſight of the Lord is the death of his Saints*: Yea, and their *ſcattered duſt*, God will take care of that, and will cauſe it to meet together again, and be made partaker with the Soul of that Glory that is reſerved in Heaven.

But then beſides the *terrors of death*, here are the *temptations of life*, the pleaſures of this life; theſe Temptations may do that upon ſome, that the terrors of death cannot do upon them; *Neither death*, no, *nor life* neither, this cannot ſeparate; but theſe cannot, yet *other things* without us are of great influence: *Angels cannot* do it, they are Creatures that *excel in ſtrength*; ſome expound it of *good Angels*, that it is ſpoken of them *by way of ſuppoſition*, Gal. 1. 8. *If we or an Angel from Heaven ſhould preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed*: not that any good Angel can be ſo bad a Meſſenger as to ſet up a *new Goſpel*, in oppoſition to the everlaſting Goſpel of Chriſt, it is ſpoken by way of *ſuppoſition*, ſo I find Learned Writers interpret it thus: No, *good Angels cannot*, its contrary to their charge and truſt; the Angels are *Miniſtring Spirits ſent*, &c. *Heb.* 1. *laſt*. therefore they cannot ſo much forget their truſt, nor be unfaithful to their charge to attempt ſuch a thing, eſpecially being now confirmed in a ſtate of Grace.

Others interpret it of *bad Angels*; now whatever

ever attempts these do make, though they are compared to a *roaring Lyon, going about seeking whom they may devour*, though they never so much desire it, yet they are in Gods Chain, *Epist. Jude* 6. *Those Angels are in Chains*, not only as *guilty Malefactors*, to be punished, but as *Mischievous persons* to be restrained, who if they were at liberty, would do more mischief than now they can. You may take it in this latter sense, which seems to be most proper: so Angels cannot do it; but there are several *Ranks and Degrees* among the Angels; therefore we read in *Ephes.* 6. 12. *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world*, &c. So here in the Text, we read of *Principalities*, and *Powers*: As they said of our Saviour, he through *Beelzebub, the Chief or Prince of Devils, did cast out Devils*; in these Principalities then is the danger. But it it is not in them neither. I find many Interpreters carrying the sense to *earthly Potentates*, the Rulers of this world; that they by all their Tyranny and persecutions (for they joyn the word *Principalities* to *Powers*) they can never be able to separate, *&c.*

But notwithstanding all we undergo for the present, who knows what may follow *for the future*? who knows what a day may bring forth? What is in the Womb of the next moment? the Apostle answers this here, not *things present*, no, *nor things to come*: though you know not what may come upon you, yet if you belong to God, and are sincere Believers, let

what will or can come; *Nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* But there are *heights and depths*, that is, heights of *Prosperity*, and depths of *Calamity*, (as some expound it:) but least the Apostles Catalogue should not yet be so full to answer every case, he puts in this general, vast, and comprehensive expression, *nor any other Creature.* If all I have said be too little, and all you are able to think at present is not sufficient, yet this is as much as can possibly be thought of, or can possibly befal you, *nor any other Creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

3. Here is *the ground* or foundation *of this inseparableness* from the love of God, that is, *because it is in Christ Jesus.* Alas! the love of God is not built upon *any thing in us*, God doth not love us upon any account of our own, but upon the account of his Son, and *his Son is always alike dear* and pretious in his sight; and what he hath done, and suffered for those for whom he hath undertaken, is alike of value in his Fathers thoughts.

4. Lastly, Here is the *strength* of the Apostles *confidence*, concerning all this; *I am fully perswaded, that neither*, &c. he was got above all doubtful ambiguities, or probabilities, or uncertainties, for, says he, *I am fully perswaded.*

Obj. But here is an Objection, *Did not this Priviledge peculiarly belong to St.* Paul, *and is it not above our capacity to attain to the same?*

Answ. I answer, St. *Paul* speaks here not of himself singly, but of *himself in conjunction* with others,

others, nothing ſhall ſeparate *us from* the love of God, it is expreſt in the plural Number. Again, the ground and foundation upon which St. *Paul* bottoms this aſſurance, and this height of his confidence, it is ſuch as all ſincere Believers are capable of. You find all along in all thoſe other Priviledges that he mentions in the former part of the Chapter, all theſe he ſpeaks of, *of being made partakers of the firſt fruits of the Spirit*, of *walking in the Spirit, and not after the fleſh*, &c. this is the foundation upon which St. *Paul* grounds his confidence, and now every ſincere Believer hath a ſhare more or leſs in all theſe: ſo much for the opening of the words.

I ſhall commend ſeveral Obſervations from them, chiefly three or four. The firſt is this:

Doct. 1. *It is the ſingular advantage of all ſincere Believers, that what ever Comforts they may be deprived of, and whatever calamities they may undergo, yet they have this for their unſpeakable ſupport, the love of God for their portion.*

It is upon this alone that the Apoſtle grounds all his confidence and comfort: he could eaſily deſpiſe all kind of troubles, and it was only upon this account. For the opening of this *Doctrine*, I ſhall only give you three hints.

1. It is the peculiar Priviledge of ſuch as are ſincere, and only ſuch, that they *have the love of God for their portion*; for *Separation implies a pre-union*; that can never be parted, that was not before joyned; and the loſs of the love of God implies a pre-injoyment of the ſame. And then the word *us*, it notes a reſtriction, as it contains

and takes in all that are ſincere, ſo it bars the door againſt all others; they have no ſhare in this Priviledge: it is as much as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, This is *our* Priviledge, and it is ſuch a Priviledge as we can never be deprived of: now the Apoſtle doth not ſpeak of Believers in that age only, but of all that ſhould be afterwards in future generations, for, *whatever was written afore-time, was written for our inſtruction, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

There is a *common love* that God bears *to all his Creatures*, as they are his *Creatures*, the workmanſhip of his hands, this is extended to all his Creatures, through the whole Univerſe, and it manifeſts it ſelf in theſe four things; I ſhall but name them.

1. In *preſerving* them; for as God by the Word of his Power brought all out of nothing, ſo by the ſame almighty Word of his power, he preſerves them from falling back into the firſt nothing, *Heb.* 1. 3. *Upholding all things by the word of his power.*

2. In *providing* for them; thus God is the great Maſter of all the Families in Heaven and earth; he hears the cries of the fowls of the air, he heareth the *cry of the Ravens*, he *cloaths the Lillies of the field*; many ſuch inſtances might be given of the Providence of God, *Matth.* 6. 26. *The fowls of the air they ſow not neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they. He opens his hand, and fills all Creatures with good: The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon*, Pſal. 145. 15.

3. In

3. In *protecting* them from dangers; this in *Matth.* 10. 29. *Not a hair falls from the head, not a sparrow falls to the ground; yet are not two Sparrows sold for a farthing? And are you not of more value than they?* These are the least considerable Creatures, yet God hath a care of them, in protecting them; no Creature can be safe one moment any longer than its under the care and protection of God.

4. In his *Governing* all his Creatures, their actions, and occurrances, and in ordering all to his own glory, and the manifestation of his infinite wisdom and goodness. *The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the Creation*, Rom. 1. 20. That is, his works of Providence and Gubernation of the World: But this is not that I am now to speak of.

Again, There is *a love* that God bears *to man as man*, as he is a Creature *of a higher rank*, and being than other Creatures, 1 *Cor.* 9. *Thou shalt not muzzel the mouth of the Oxe; Doth God take care of Oxen?* It is provided that mercy and kindness should be shewed to those poor labouring Creatures: Doth God enact these Laws for Oxen? *or saith he it for our sakes? for our sakes, no doubt, this is written.*

But the *highest testimony* that God shews of his love to man, as man, was that of his Sons taking upon him *the nature of man, not the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham*, Heb. 2.

Yet over, and above both these, the love that God bears to his Creatures, as they are his Creatures; and to men as men more than to other Creatures; there is a *peculiar and higher kind*

of love that God bears *to his people, as they are peculiarly his* : whether only *as elected*, God takes care to bring them into himself ; whomsoever God assigned to Glory as the end, he assignes to Grace as the means, to attain that end. Or, whether they be *actually sanctified*, still God hath a peculiar respect to his people, as they are peculiarly his ; Therefore *David* begs, *Psal.* 106. 4, 5. *Shew me the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoyce in the gladness of thy Nation: that I may glory with thine inheritance* : God hath favour for others, but he hath a *special* favour for his ; Now this is the great Priviledge of all sincere Believers ; besides, the general love God hath to all Creatures, these he looks upon as his Jewels, as his darlings, as his delight, as persons whom he singles out, as special Objects of his favour. That's the first.

2. Nothwithstanding this peculiar love of God to sincere Believers, *yet they may* nevertheless *be sorely afflicted*, the Apostle reckons up here many smart Afflictions ; in the verses before you read of *Tribulation*, and *distress*, and *persecution, famine, nakedness, perils, sword, life, death, Angels, Principallities, powers.* Now while the Apostle asserts so expressly, that none of these shall be able to separate from the love of God, he *strongly implies*, that those that are the people of God, those that are the real objects of his love, may yet *be liable to all these* ; they are not exempted from any of these : They may be persecuted, and yet are beloved of God ; they may be exercised with wants, with nakedness, and undergo cruel usages from *men*, yet beloved

ved of *God*, under *great Affliction*, and yet under *great Affection* from God: The *distinguishing love* of God makes *no distinction* in these outward things, *Eccles.* 9. 1, 2. *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him; all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean and unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; as he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath.* Their Afflictions may be as great, nay exceed the afflictions of others, as you may see *Psal.* 37. and *Psal.* 73 both those Psalmes are upon that subject: as to the troubles of this life, the most sincere Servants of God may have a deeper share and portion in them, than they that do not own God in sincerity. *In this world you shall have trouble: They that will live Godly in Christ shall suffer persecution*, &c. These are the predictions for the *future*; and if you look back to the experience of *former Ages*, the *flaming bush* hath been an *Embleme* of the state of Gods Church, while the Church *is here*: the Bush was flaming and burning, and yet not consumed. You see then, it is the Priviledge of sincere Believers, that they have an interest in the special love of God; and you see also notwithstanding, the peculiar love of God to them, they are liable to many smart afflictions.

Thirdly, Whatever their afflictions are, though they may be above, and greater than others, yet notwithstanding they have *supports above others*, even the love of God: you may see that this along hath been their great support,

their *relation* to, and their *interest* in the Lord; as you may read in 1 *Sam.*30.6. when *David* was once ſtript of no leſs than *his* all, his Wives, his Children, his Subſtance, his Cattle, all were carried away Captive, yet he *incouraged himſelf in the Lord his God*: Nay, this is the Promiſe that God hath made to his, *Pſalm.* 89. 31, 32, 33, 34. ſpeaking of them them that are his in Covenant —— *If they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments: Then will I viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes. Nevertheleſs, my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* I will chaſtiſe them, they ſhall know what it is to provoke me, to offend me, yet I will have a kindneſs for them: when it is the fouleſt weather with the people of God here below, God by his Providences doth ordinarily make it clear above; when the world doth moſt frown, God doth uſually moſt ſmile; when his people are condemned of men, he then vouchſafeth them the cleareſt evidences of their acceptance with him, 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9. *We are afflicted on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; we are perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed*: ſtill they had ſome relief in God, and God did let them then eſpecially find it, when they did moſt need it; this is uſually the time wherein God manifeſts more of tenderneſs to his people, than at other ſeaſons: it is promiſed *Hoſea* 2. 14. *I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs, and ſpeak comfortably to her.*

a wilderneſs, that is a deſert, a place full of ſill of wants, of ſtraits and difficulties, but that ſhall be a time and place of Gods love to be manifeſted. The Apoſtle found this alſo true. *As our afflictions abound, ſo our conſolations do much more abound* : upon this account it is, that afflictions when they are ſanctified, and we are ſupported under them, and do make a right uſe of them, they are frequently mentioned in Scripture as choice bleſſings, as eminent favours.

Thus this Doctrine is cleared, *Whatever Comforts a gracious Soul may go without, what Calamities it may undergo, yet it hath this unſpeakable ſupport, the love of God*: this love is a peculiar love, and it doth not exempt from Afflictions, but it doth admirably ſweeten thoſe Afflictions that the Servants of God do meet with.

For the Uſe of this Point.

This *Informs* us of the neceſſity of an *eye of Faith* to enable us to *make a right Judgment* both of *Perſons* and *Things* : Senſe and Reaſon are incompetent Judges of things Inviſible, becauſe theſe are above Senſe, above the reach of Reaſon, many of them; we are apt to think when God ſtrips his people of their eſtates, of Creature-comforts of Friends, of neer Relations, that when theſe are gone, all is gone with them, no, no, they have the love of God then; as our Saviour ſaid, *I have meat that ye know not of*, ſo they have comforts and refreſhments that others know not of ; *Strangers cannot intermeddle with their joy*, theſe are out of the reach of all kind of enemies.

2. Doct.

2. Doct. *This peculiar love of God, is such a mercy, that nothing but the want of it, can make any of us miserable.*

This I ground upon the Text: The scope of the Apostle in this place is to comfort the people of God against all the discouragements that this life is liable to, and capable of: Now the Argument he alledges to this purpose is no more than this: *Nothing can separate you* (says he) *from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus*; and in as much adds, *nothing more but this*; he thought he had spoke enough in that one word: hence I gather, it is a mercy so highly considerable, that nothing but the want of this can make any of us miserable. All the miseries and calamities in the world, that can come upon us, cannot make us miserable, if we may but enjoy this one thing, *the love of God*: it is, as if the Apostle had said, I reckon, that such Afflictions may separate you from the comforts of this world, but let what affliction will, or can come upon you, they cannot separate you from these refreshments: this one singular Priviledge, the Apostle opposeth to all those kinds of calamities that he had mentioned before; though it is true, every particular calamity is not mentioned amongst these, yet the greatest and worst are, and the rest are included in them.

If God should enlarge Satans Commission against us, as he did once against *Job*, and deliver all we have into his hands and power; and if Satan

Satan should never fail in executing the utmost of that power, that God gives him; should God deal thus with us, yet there is enough in the love of God to sweeten all, *Psalm.* 63. 3. *Thy loving kindness is better than life.* So our Translation reads it, but in the Hebrew it is מחיים *præ vitis*, that is, *better than lives.* The meaning of this is (as a Learned Expositor glosses upon the Text) *than any kind of life*; better than life, with any kind of advantages that may render it more sweet and pleasant to us, it is better than lives: now *life* you know is of all outward mercies the highest, for all other things are perfectly insignificant to us without life; *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life. But thy loving kindness is better life:* So in *Psalm.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. David* did not say, he had nothing in the world, for he had a Kingdom, a Crown, he had a great deal of worldly honours and greatness, but these were not the things he looked at; he could pass by these; he eyed Communion with God, and the favour of God was more than all, *Psalm.* 4. 6, 7. *There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine did encrease.* Now how often did this holy man solace himself upon this account, his interest in the favour of God. *Psalm.* 16. 5, 6. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup, thou maintainest my Lot. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places,*

eas, yea, I have a goodly heritage. There was nothing that this holy man made his boast of, but only of God, and you find him often making him his glory; and truly, well might *David* be of this mind, well might he despise all worldly greatness in comparison of God; for could he have added Kingdom to Kingdom, and world to world, all had been nothing in comparison of him. That excellent description of God in *Isaiah* 40. 12. is highly magnificent, and very helpful to raise up our thoughts to consider the greatness of God. *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out Heaven with a span? &c.* But now to prove this truth farther, I shall alledge these six Reasons.

1. *Reas.* There is *nothing but the love of God can make us happy*; and therefore there is nothing but the *want* of this love that can make us *miserable*; for misery consists in the want of some good, or the enduring of some evil. Now nothing, I say, can make us happy, but the love of God. It is *not Honours*, for, *not many Noble are called*: it is *not Greatness*, for Greatness and goodness do not always go together: a man may be a *Great man*, and withal a *great sinner*, yea, a miserable man. It is said of *Naaman*, that he was a Great man, but withal he was a *Leper*, and that spoil'd all. It is *not Riches* can do it, *Mans life consists not in the abundance of the things of this world*: Besides, you read of an *infamous rich man*, Luke 12. he was boasting of his barnes, and granaries, and projecting how he might pull them down, and make new kind

of

ſtore-houſes for the reception of his incoms: When alas! *that night his Soul ſhould be required of him.* And in *Luke* 16. you read of one faring deliciouſly every day, but both of theſe were in a very ſad condition, as to their Souls; you remember the Parables. It is not *Friends, Children,* or *Relations* they cannot make us happy; we find thoſe that have been under the diſpleaſure of God to abound in all theſe; no leſs than twelve Dukes proceeded from the Loyns of profane *Eſau.*

In a word, it is not *Creatures below us,* that can make us happy; for happineſs is mans perfection, and Creatures below us are below perfection; nor *equal with* us; nay, nor *above*; all Creatures above us are finite, but the deſires of our hearts are infinite, and that which hath its bounds, can never ſatisfie boundleſs deſires; and where deſires are not ſatisfied, there can be no happineſs.

But although God ſhould give us ſo much of the world as our own hearts can deſire or wiſh; yet if he hide his face, or ſtand at a diſtance from us, there is enough in the want of that ſingle mercy to make us altogether miſerable; therefore as *Job* ſpeaks of Wiſedom, the ſame we may ſay of the love of God, *Job.* 28. 12, 13, 14. *But where is wiſdom found, and where is the place of underſtanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth ſaith, it is not in me, and the Sea ſaith, it is not in me.* verſe 15. *Gold ſhall not be given for it, neither ſhall ſilver be weighed for the price thereof.*

2. *Reaſ.*

2. *Reaſ.* The *love of God* is ſuch a mercy that it is abundantly ſufficient to *make up the want of all other mercies*, and to *ſweeten* the ſoureſt of all kind of *Afflictions*, that can befal us. God in his giving himſelf, gives us more than all other comforts; what we have not in the *ſtream*, yet if we have it in the *fountain*, it is more *freſh*, and more *delightful*; ſays *Bernard*, *Lord, where can I be well without thee, and where can I be ill if may enjoy thee? Thy favour is better than life.* True, we may be impatiently deſirous of this, and that Creature-comforts, and as froward in thoſe deſires as *Rachel* was, when ſhe *quarrelled with Jacob for Children, Give me Children, or elſe I die*: we cannot live without this, and that comfort, we cannot ſubſiſt without God humor us, *Gen.* 30. 1. But as *Elkanah* ſaid to *Hannah*, ſo may we ſay to our ſulleneſt and moſt impatient deſires, *Am not I better to thee than ten ſons?* Is not God better to us than all? If God ſhould deny us this, or that, or take away this, or that Creature-comfort, is not God better to us than all.

3. *Reaſ.* Thirdly, the love of God in its full perfection is *the very happineſs of Heaven it ſelf*; and ſo much as we enjoy of the love of God here on earth, ſo much we have of Heaven here on earth. The excellencie of Heaven is deſcribed thus, 1 *Cor.* 15. 28. *God ſhall be all in all.*

There ſhall be *no marrying, nor giving in marriage*, but we ſhall be *as the Angels of God*, we ſhall there have no need of theſe Comforts, becauſe there we ſhall have a full fruition of God.

There

There ſhall be *no Sun, nor Moon, nor Stars*, there is no want of theſe, becauſe *the Lamb is the brightneſs thereof*. And if the love of God in its fulleſt perfection be the very happineſs of Heaven; then certainly nothing can make that perſon miſerable that enjoys any part of Heaven here on earth. *In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy*, yea, and that *for evermore*. There is much comfort in what we have of his preſence here; but what his people have of his preſence here, is but a kind of abſence to what they ſhall have hereafter, 2 *Cor.* 5, 6, 8. *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord. We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* The preſence of God which we have here, he compares with the preſence which we ſhall have hereafter; and the preſence we have of God here, he accounts a kind of abſence in compariſon of that, as you may ſee by comparing thoſe two verſes together.

4. *Reaſ.* 4. Argument, That nothing can make a perſon miſerable, but the want of this ſpecial and peculiar love of God, it appears from the *excellencie of the perſon loving*; THE LOVE OF GOD: this is a great word; *if God be for us, who can be againſt us? if God juſtifie us, who can condemn us?* v. 31, 33. of this Chapt. 2 *Timoth* 4. 16, 17. St. *Paul* when all forſook him, thought he had enough in this, that *God ſtood by him. At my firſt anſwering no man ſtood by me, but all men forſook me*; (this was uncomfortable in it ſelf) *I pray God it may not*

be not laid to their charge. Nevertheless, the Lord stood by me and strengthened me. This contradicted all that went before, this circumstance as to the point of troubles and afflictions, because there is more in God, to support, and comfort, then there could be in afflictions to deject and and discourage.

Our Saviour could not speak to his Disciples without reproving them for their cowardize, foretelling them how it should shortly appear: *You shall leave me alone.* What? then to be left alone, when he was to go through all those troubles? this was a very uncomfortable thing, *yet* (says he) *I am not alone, for the Father is with me,* John 16. 32. it is some *refreshment* in our sorrows, to have *Friends to pity,* and to compassionate us; but oh! what a refreshment is it, to have the infinite God to love us? You know the *Emphasis* of all the sorrows that our Saviour underwent during his sufferings here on earth was, That God had withdrawn the sense of his love from him, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* as for his Disciples, their leaving of him, their turning their backs upon him, and falling off from him, these things he could easily bear; but Gods forsaking was the bitterness of his cup, and made him cry him with a loud voice, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.*

5. *Reas.* May be drawn from, *The nature of the love of God is such an eminent mercy, that nothing can make that person miserable that doth partake of this one Priviledge:* because,

1. The

1. The Love of God is the *tenderest*, it is the *most affectionate* Love. The Love of *Parents* is great, but the love of God is greater, Math. 7. 11. *If you that are evil know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more then shall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask him.*

The love of a *Mother* is great, but the love of God is greater, and exceeds it, Isa. 49 15, 16. *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her Womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the Palms of my Hands, thy Walls are continually before me.* The tenderest Compassions that can be found on Earth, come far more short of the compassions of an infinitely gratious God, then the least drop of Water to the vast body of the Ocean. There is no proportion between these two. *In all Afflictions* of his People, *he is* said to be *afflicted*, thereby intimating that he bears a part of their afflictions, and is sharer with them in all their troubles, Isa. 63. 9. *He that toucheth them, toucheth the Apple of his Eye*, Zach. 2. 8

2. The love of God, it is the *truest and most prudent love*, there is nothing of Cockering, or indulgence in it. It is no such love as to overlook the failings of his own People; no, *Every Child whum he loves he corrects*, Heb. 12. 6. *Judgement begins at the house of God*, God is more quick in his chastising of them, then of others; and his love makes him to be so, because God would recover them sooner and pre-

vent their longer wandrings from him. *Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word*, Psal. 119. 67. Therefore he says to *Israel*, *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth; therefore you will I punish for all your Iniquities*, Amos 3. 2. My kindness to you is far above all others, therefore I will correct you, I will make you smart now, that you may not smart for ever; you shall now feel the bitterness of Sin, to bring you to Repentance, and these Afflictions helps in order thereunto. As concerning others (the Sinners in *Zion* whom God regards not) it is said *why should you be smitten any more*, Isa. 1. 5. *Ye will revolt yet more and more.*

This is a great Priviledge, and part of the Covenant, and Promise, that God hath made with his People, as Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34. *If his Children forsake my Law and walk not in my Judgements; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments: Then will I visit their Traugression with the Rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my Lips.* The visiting their trangressions, with a Rod, and their Iniquities with Stripes, is mentioned here, as an eminent Promise, and part of the Covenant of Grace. *David* accounted the Rebukes of the righteous, a great favour to him, *Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a great kindness; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent Oyl which shall not break my head*, Psal. 141. 5.

3. The

3. The love of God is the *most liberal, and bountiful love.* All love is liberal, and bountiful, and according as the person is in ability, so is his love more, or less bountiful. It is said of *Ahashuerus*, he gave gifts becoming his magnificence, so God gives gifts to his People, suitable to his greatness, becoming his Magnificence. *Jesus Christ* is called *the gift* of God, and what gift could God give greater? John 3. 16. *God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* He had but one only begotten Son, and he gave him, Rom. 8. 32. *He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things.*

This is such a pledge of Gods bounty, and evidence of his liberality, that we need not doubt of the goodness of God in other things, since God has given so high an instance as this; *God will give grace, and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,* Psal. 84. 7.

4. The love of God is the *most firm, and constant love,* alas, we are poor mutable Creatures, but God is an unchangable God, *whom he loves he loves to the end,* and that end is without end. Therefore *the loving kindness of God* is said to be *better then life,* Psal. 63. 3. and it is better then life upon this account, because it lasts longer then life, yea then all that in life we are made Partakers of; for if a man live in God, he lives better then in all other enjoyments whatsoever.

5. The love of God is an *Omnipotent love*, it is such as is able to effect his good pleasure, to them that are the objects of his love. Friends may wish us well, but can do no more, in some Cases; but there is no blessing needful, there is nothing that may be helpful to us, but God is able to vouchsafe it; in him dwells infinite fulness, and power. Thus you see from these five Reasons, that this peculiar love of God is such a mercy, that nothing but the want of this, can make any of us miserable.

Application, First, If it be so, that nothing can make that person miserable, that enjoys the love of God, then certainly *God is no hard Master*, nor does he deal rigorously with his People, when he suffers them to be afflicted? Though he lets them meet with some troubles, and calamities, and many of them very smart ones too, yet all this cannot be accounted harsh dealing, because nothing can make them miserable, that are in the love of God. They may be under sufferings, as the Apostles speaks, 2 *Cor.* 4. 8. They may be under straits and difficulties, but in all these they are *not forsaken, we are troubled on every side, but not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair*. Cast down, but not cast off, afflicted but not unhappy; I say this may silence all those Cavils, and hard thoughts that our corrupt Natures are apt to entertain concerning *God*, especially in his providential dealings with his People.

2. Inference is this, If the love of God be such an eminent priviledge, *How dreadful then is their Case that are under the hatred of*

God

God? What ever hath been said concerning the love God, the greatest word that can be spoken of, it is the infiniteness thereof, that it is *an infinite love*; Now the infiniteness of Gods hatred makes that as terrible and dreadful, as the other is desireable, infiniteness in God, as it plainly demonstrates God to be, on the one hand the best Friend, so on the other hand the worst of Enemies; and as it speaks his love to be the most desirable portion, so of all kind of evils, his hatred to be the most formidable.

3. Inference is this, Take notice of the *folly and madness* of those Persons, that can be *patient and quiet under the displeasure of God*, and can content themselves without seeking reconciliation to him, and being received into favour with God. Is not this the Case of many? is not this the Cafe of many of us? It would be well for us if we would put this question home to our own Souls, you see nothing can make us miserable but only the want of Gods love; the Apostle thought he had spoke enough in this one word, to bear up their Spirits, against the fear of all those Calamities, which at that time were threatned, as Persecution, Famine, Sword, Nakedness, Perils, of all kinds: But what shall bear up those who have no share in it? since there is nothing can make us happy but this love of God, there is nothing can make us miserable but the want of it; it is folly and madness in us, not so much as to regard this love. *Why do you spend your money for that that is not Bread? hearken to me* (saith God) *and your Souls shall live*, Isa. 55. 2. 3.

4. Inference, This Doctrine of admirable *advantage* to the People of God, *under their greatest losses*; for whatever they may loose they *cannot loose their interest in the love of God*, not from any excellency in themselves, but the I have given you an accounnt of that, in that it is singularnes of Gods grace and bounty to them, and his care for them, and their welfare.

SERMON

SERMON XI.

Rom. 8. ult.

Neither height, &c.

I Shall now go on to the 6. *and last Reason* of this Doctrine, *(That this peculiar Love of God, is such a mercy, that nothing but the want of this can make any of us miserable.*

Because of the admirable *fruits and effects* of this love, in the many benefits we receive from thence, it is from the love of God, that we receive every mercy that we enjoy, if it be but *common Mercies*, we receive them from the love of God.

It is true, the difficulty of this Case is, to know whether common mercies are the Fruit of special love. That they are from the love and goodness of God, it's clear, *Matth.* 5. 45. *God causeth his Sun to shine upon the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

These mercies are common mercies, and that they are from common bounty that is unquestionable,

stionable; for as God is the Fountain of all good, so the *love* of God is the *only Motive* to incline him to do good to his *Creatures*; there is *nothing in them to move* him to do them good, but it is his *own goodness* that moves him to it; he is the giver and bestower of *every good and perfect gift*; *the Father of Lights*.

Now whether you speak of common or special Mercies, all are the expressions of his love, common to some, peculiar to others; as for common mercies, they are not common to his People. There is a vast *difference* between the mercies that God vouchsafeth to his People, and those he vouchsafeth to others, the mercies the People of God enjoy are the special Fruits and benefits of his special love; and it is that upon which we ground our hopes of mercy for the future.

2. It is the love of God that *makes every mercy* to be *indeed a mercy to us*; The absence of Gods love is enough to blast all our choicest blessings. God may give us abundance of these outward blessings, but what are these unless he gives us his love with them. God answered the desires of the People of *Israel*; they must have dainties, and be fed with *Quailes*, but with all he *sent leanness into their Souls*, they had those sweet dainties, with bitter Sauce. So it is said again of some of the People of *Israel*, Psal. 69. 22. *Their Table became a snare before them*, which is quoted again in *Rom.* 11. 9. Alas, while we remain under the displeasure of God, though out of his common bounty, he may give us never so many comforts; yet these are but like the waters of *Marah*; there is nothing but bit-

bitternes in them. God may feed us perhaps very plentifully with outward enjoyments, even to fatnefs, but this fatnefs will be but to deſtruction, and ſlaughter. As they cryed out to the Prophet, 2 *Kings* 4. 40. *Death is in the Pot*; ſo death is in all our enjoyments, if we have not the love of God with them.

But, when we can read an Inſcription of love in every comfort, and the light of Gods countenance ſhining through every mercy; this ſets Mercies at a higher rate. Herein is the great difference between the People of God and others; they may enjoy the ſame Mercies; but the ſame Mercies are a *Bleſſing* to the one, and a *Curſe* to the other; they may partake of the ſame outward Priviledges, but not with the ſame inward Sweetnes. The ſame *Cloud* that was *a light to the Iſraelites*, was *darknes to the Ægyptians*; The ſame *Ark* that was for *ſafety to the Iſraelites*, was for *deſtruction* to the *Philiſtines*: The ſame *Red Sea* that was a *Wall of* ſafety to the *Iſraelites*, was a Floud to overthrow their Enemies.

The People of God have the ſame Mercies that others have, but God gives them grace to make a right uſe of them, for ſpiritual ends, and advantages, and ſo to them they better Mercies. God doth not onely give to them Talents, but hearts to improve them, *Titus* 1. 15. *To the pure, all things are pure*, &c. Mark; let them be what things they will, *all* is pure to them; *but to the impure and defiled all things are defiled.*

3. It

3. It is the love of God, that is not only the Fountain of all good, and makes every thing to be indeed good, but this love makes all the *evils* that we meet with *to be good* to us; it makes burthens light, yokes easie. Sometimes it does so *literally*, as in the Case of the *three Children*; God so loved them, that he took away the heat of the Fire, that not so much as a Hair of their Heads was singed, or their Garments scorcht: But in a *spiritual Compensation* God is never wanting to his People. Those suffering *Martyrs* in Queen *Maries* days, some of them found those scorching Flames, as so many Beds of Roses, so full were they of comfort from the sense of Gods love to them, they were above the sense of any kind of trouble or torture; though in it self, it could not be thought little. Nay, the love God hath a singular ingredience into Calamities, in the afflictions of his People; it hath singular Efficacy to take away the bitterness of Afflictions. How to some did the love of God make their shame glorious, and their dolorous Afflictions to be delightful? it is said of the Apostles, that they went away from the Counsel *rejoycing that they were thought worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ.* Rejoycing that they were graced with Reproaches; they looked upon these as their Crowns, and their glory. What is said concerning the Phylosophers Stone, (whether it be fabulous or not I will discourse) that it turns all into Gold that it toucheth; The same may be applied to the love of God, it puts good into every evil thing. If we can be but made Partakers of this;

his love, it is such a most excellent priviledge, that nothing then can hurt us, or make us miserable: True, our own unbelief, and weakness, may keep us off from the comfort of this love many times; but this is a certain Rule, *every thing hath only so much of good in it, as it hath of Gods love in it*, if Gods love be in our Afflictions, then this puts Sweetness into our Afflictions; and that partly by the *Addition of some good* by them, and partly by *abstracting of some evil*; namely, of our minds from outward things, and by setting them upon higher objects.

4. An other effect of this love of God, is this? it *makes us good in our selves*, it is the love of God that is the only Fountain of all the grace, that any heart of us here hath had wrought in it. *Who made the to man to differ? or what hast thou that thou hast not received?* What thou hast received it is of grace, not of debt, it is the love of God that does not only lay the *Foundation* of grace, but that does carry out the *Superstructure* of grace, he that is the beginner, the *Author*, he is the *increaser* of all good) nay he likewise *preserves it*; God from his love to his People, takes care to preserve that grace he hath wrought in them. Indeed, if God did not take care to preserve grace where it is once wrought, it would then soon dye, and vanish and come to nothing; grace in us, and the working of it at first, is no less then a Miracle, because our hearts are so uncapacitated, & so full of perverse Principles for the Reception of this work at first; and the preserving of it, when

it

it is wrought, is as miraculous that grace should be kept alive in us, it is as much as a spark of Fire to be kept alive in a whole Ocean of Water; That weak grace, when it is in conjunction with so many strong Corruptions, and those having such aides, and assistances, from without the Worlds and the Devils temptations, that grace should yet live, it is the *Lords doing* and it *is marvelous in our Eyes.* In the 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. it is said of the sincere People of God, that they are *kept by the power of God through Faith unto salvation*, not by any power of their own, but by the *Power of God*, and it is no less then a Mighty Power of God, that can keep them. I say it is the love of God that does begin and increase, and preserve grace, and excites, and and conserves *and establisheth it; it is a good thing to have the heart stablished with Grace;* it is God must quicken it; grace in us would otherwise be but a heavy and dull thing, if God should not by the Gales of his Spirit blow up those Sparks that are in the hearts of his People.

Thus I have gone over the Doctrinal part, you see the peculiar love that God bears to all sincere Believers, is a priviledge so vastly great, that those that do partake of this priviledge, nothing can make them miserable. For this one single priviledge, the Apostle opposeth against the all Calamities, that this life is capable of, as *Persecution, Famine, Sword, Nakedness*, and the like.

Applic. There are only 2. things that I shall speak to by way of Information. 1. If it be so, that the love of God is enough to Counterballance,

ballance, to Counterpoyse, all the Calamities that this life is capable off; Then this may inform us: That the *love of God is the highest and most transcendent Priviledge* that man is capable of. What ever delight or comfort we find in any Creature enjoyment, they have this double vanity in them, and the love of God is above them.

1. They are *Scant.*
2. They are *short.*

First, They are *Scant*, they cannot supply all our wants; but in the middest of all these, thought Sufficiencies, our Souls will be in many wants without the love of God. These are *particular* good things, and are only suitable to particular Persons, Cases, and Indigencies; but the love of God is an *universal* good.

If we look upon the dangers that we lye open to, the love of God (if we have an interest in that) sets us on a Rock that is higher then all Waves, and will shelter us from all Storms; it opens a Treasury of Mercy, that is sufficient to supply all wants. It is an ordinary saying the *Kings presence makes the Court*; so I may say of the presence of the *King of glory*; where ever he is, there is comfort and happiness, and where can his presence more properly be said to be, then where his love is?

That *God is an universal good*, I think I need not stand to clear, that hath been cleared by the *Heathen*: Therefore the names that many of the antient Phylosophers gave God was; that he is a *God of truth* and he is *an universal good*, and as God is so *in himself*, so his love makes him thus

to

ye are. He is all good, in the want of all outward good; and how vaſt, and unlimited ſoever our deſires may be, yet there is enough in God, to fill every corner of our hearts, *Pſal.* 81. 10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* Come with high expectations, raiſed, and enlarged deſires; what then? I will fill them, ſaith God. Do but look upon thoſe demenſions (concerning the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus) mentioned in the *Eph.* 3. 18. 19. It is a love that *paſſeth knowledge*, indeed there is a ſeeming contradiction in the words. *That ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth; And to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth Knowledge.* Know that, that can never be known. We may know that *experimentally*; that can never known *Comprehenſively*. There is height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and all theſe beyond all kind of Meaſure; and therefore the moſt experience Chriſtians, when they have ſpoken of the love of God, inſtead of expreſſions, have made uſe of Admirations, 1 *Joh.* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God*; it was ſuch a manner of love, that he was unable to expreſs it, and none is able to underſtand it, nor to comprehend it.

But let our Caſe be what it will; in having his favour, we have all we want; if God takes away our comforts; we have thoſe comforts, when they are removed, though not *formally*, yet *ſubſtantially*: or elſe how can thoſe ſeeming Contradictions be reconciled? *Pſal.* 68. 5. where

where God hath promised to be *a Father to the Fatherless, and a Husband to the Widdow.* To be *Fatherless* and yet to have a *Father* is a Contradiction; to be a *Widdow*, and yet to have a *Husband*? They shall have these virtually in God; they shall have the comfort of these. God in the ordinary way of his providence comforts, refresheth his People by these ordained things; but yet, as God gives these outward things, so he makes them refreshing to us; for these cannot do it alone: *Man lives not by Bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* Now as God in the ordinary course of providence, refresheth his People by these helps; so he can without these helps, refresh his People immediately by himself.

That is the first, our Creature comforts are *Scant*; they will serve in *some Cases* but *not in all*: but the love of God is of that universal extent, that it reacheth *every Case*.

2. There is this vanity in all our Creature comforts, they are *but short*. They may be refreshing for a while, but they do not continue; it is not long that they can continue. *All Flesh is Grass and the glory thereof as the Flower of the Field, the Grass withereth, and the Flower fadeth but the word of the Lord endures for ever*: So we may say of all our Earthly enjoyments. *Psal.* 119. 96. *I have seen an end of all perfections.* I have looked upon all the desireable things in this world, and I have seen an end of them, that is, all these perfections. *But thy Commandments* (the comforts and priviledges built upon the Word of God) *these are exceeding broad.* Alas,

as

as to all our Creature enjoyments in this world, we are in a double capacity of loosing the possession of them. *They are Mortal and may die before us.* How many are there that have out lived their comforts, and all that hath been dear to them in this world?

Again, *we are mortal*, and we may *dye before them*: But the love of God is an everlasting love. Everlastingness being added to any thing it puts an infinite value upon it.

Therefore *the Joyes of Heaven* are so transcendently glorious because they are everlasting. If there were any probability of an end to be put to those Joyes, it would dash all the glory of Heaven; and Heaven it self would be no longer Heaven to the People of God, as the Apostle speaks, 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. concerning the discoveries of Heaven, the Prophecies of an other world, and the priviledges of the Gospel, says he, *If we had hope in Christ in this world only, we were of all persons the most miserable.* Did they not enjoy some thing of God here? yes, but they had hopes of a *full enjoyment* of God for ever: Alas, to fall short of these hopes, and to be kept out of these enjoyments, these frustrations and disapointments would be ten thousand times beyond what the disappointments, that carnal worldlings would meet with in their disappointments.

On the other side the *Torments of Hell* are therefore so dreadful, because they are everlasting; for if there were but any probability of a release from those Torments, there would in a manner be no kind of Hell, to what now it is;

if

if once there were any hopes, that the Worm would dye, and the Fire go out. *Everlasting* adds a great deal of weight to any thing, and makes it highly transcendent.

The *State of Innocency* was far short of our state of Recovery; because that was a mutable State: Man was left to the freedom of his will; he had power to stand, and ability to resist, all oppositions, and temptations; but still he was left to a mutable will. But our estate of Recovery, is another kind of Estate; (as to our security in it) because it depends upon Jesus Christ. (as I shall shew when I come to speak of that part of the Text.) The love of God *is a fixt* love, because it is in and through Jesus Christ.

Appl. For the *Application* of this point. How abundantly well are they provided for, that have the love of God for their portion? though they have nothing else, though they have not a Friend on Earth, yet if they have the God of Heaven to be their Friend, if they have God to own and stand by them they have enough. This was Saint *Pauls* comfort, *Though no man stood by me, yet the Lord stood by me*, 2 Tim. 4. 16. 17. Though thou hast no estate, nor Friend, nor Creature comfort, yet in having the love of God thou hast all; nay ten thousand times more then all. You may judge what a refreshing it was to the Prophet *Daniel*, *Dan.* 9. 23. *At the beginning of thy Supplications the Commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved*; when *Daniel* was ready to faint under his Vision in the 10. Chap. 7. 8. in

the 11. verse; *O Daniel greatly beloved!* what greater word could be spoken then this? A man greatly beloved of the great God, *Psal.* 144. 15. *Happy is the People that is in such a case, yea happy is that People whose God is the Lord.*

Let our condition be what it will in all other respects, yet if we have but this single privilege, there is enough in this alone to make us happy. Though we be under reproaches as St. *Pauls* was, yet he be being clear in his Conscience towards God, that he had a Conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man, he trampled on those Reproaches: Its *a small thing for me to be judged by mans Judgment.* We pass *through good report and ill report.*

If our condition be *want*, what can he want, who hath an interest in him, in whom is infinite fulness? If our condition be *Sufferings*, what suffering can be harsh to them that have the presence and love of God to sweeten them? Here is our strength and comfort indeed, but if God with hold his love, or suspend the manifestation of it, where are we? *Death* it self which is the *King of Terrors* is no terrour to us if we have but the love of God; there is enough in that to turn the dark Valley of the shadow of death, into a pleasant entry into everlasting glory, *Psal.* 23. 4. *Though I walk through the Valley of the the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: For thou art with me, thy Rod, and thy Staff they comfort me.* Why? because thou art with me; with me? why God is with all his Creatures, he is every where. Yea, but with me in thy favour, and love, and care, and tenderness, to uphold, sup-

part, and comfort me, when none else can comfort me.

2. *Appl.* The next use is by way of *examination*. You see this privilege is highly great; it is no small matter any of us, to know in what posture we stand in reference to it. It is our great, and cheif concern, for all depends upon this; therefore let me perswade you from hence to examine your interest in the love of God. And although the love of God as it is in him, is secret and invisible to us; yet it discovers its self in its Fruits and Effects, so that it may become discoverable. There are many hidden Causes, but they may be discovered by their effects; as we know the nature of a Tree by the Fruit, and the nature of a Fountain by the Stream. Now if we would know the love of God to us, the truest way to discern it, is by our love to God. Examine your selves by this, 1 John 4. 19. *We love him because he first loved us.* If thou hast any spark of love to God, to his truth, to his ways, to his ordinances, to his People, all these are as so many Fruits of his love to thee. He loved thee first, and that love kindled in thy heart a love to him. Love to God is a spark that comes from Heaven. But you will say our love to God may be as hidden and difficult a thing for us to discern in regard (especially) of the deceitfulness of our hearts, as the love of God to us is. I shall therefore turn you to one place of Scripture, Joh. 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self*

to him. He is loved of God that keeps his Commandments, that is, that makes it his design, and endeavour so to do. Now consider what love do you find in your hearts towards God, his truth and his ways, &c. and from hence you may reasonably conclude his love to you.

2. A second Rule by which we may be helped in discerning whether we have any right or title to the love of God, is this. What have you received *those Mercies* from God *that are the infallible Pledges* of his peculiar love? there are no kind of outward Mercies, almost but God may and does sometimes bestow those things in anger; God answered the People of *Israel*, in many of their rash requests in anger, he gave them quailes in anger, &c.

Again, the outward Mercies at best, (if they do not come in anger) are but Fruits of Gods common bounty. But how what Mercies do you partake of, which are infallible Pledges of his special love? there are such Mercies, there are indeed some Mercies that may be called saving Mercies, in respect of their nature and conducency to bring us to partake of all things saving Mercies indeed, as the Gospel for instance. Yet God vouchsafes this to them that are not heirs of it, as the Jews had the word, *Psalm* 147. 19, 20. *He shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgements unto Israel: He hath not dealt so with any Nation; and as for his judgements they have not known them.* Rom. 3. 2. *To them were committed the Oracles of God.* Herein God hath been good to

his

his People above others, the body of his professing People, *Rom. 9. 4. Theirs is the Covenant, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the Promises.*

Yet this Mercy, though it be a more limited Mercy then ordinary and common Mercies are, yet is no such distinguishing Mercy, but that we may be Partakers of it, and yet not have an interest of Gods peculiar love. This sadly appears, for alas how many are there that live under the Gospel, and yet are so far from reaping that salvation which the Gospel brings, that it only heightens their misery and condemnation? How many woes did our Saviour denounce against those Cities, that enjoyed the Gospel in so great a plenty, and yet lived unprofitably under these Instructions? I do wish that we all may take warning by their woe.

But the Pledges of Gods peculiar love, are cheifly *the Operations of his Spirit upon our hearts.* Now what convincing Operations have you found upon your hearts, in the first workings of the Spirit of God? though his work be to comfort, yet it begins in Convictions. *I will send another Comforter, and he shall convince the world of sin.* Joh. 16. 8. Are you so convinced of sin, as to be brought off from it? to have your hearts set against it? though you cannot be free from sin, yet this is your burthen and your lamentation, and you groan under it. It is with you as it was with Saint *Paul*, when he cryed out. *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death*, that is of sin that I carry about with me. Do you partake of

the graces of Gods Spirit? the inlightning, the quickening, the renewing, the sanctifying graces thereof? Do you find your hearts, to be warmly affected with the things of God, & of Heaven? you cannot lightly pass by these things if you are his: Are you acquainted with the Supports of Gods Spirit in the mideſt of your diſtreſſes? there are none of you but may be in troubles, and yet may have many falſe Supports (I grant) as natural ſtourneſs, and common Principles, may carry men far: But are you acquainted with the comforts of Gods Spirit, have they been your ſupport? Again, hath God not only vouchſafed you the means of grace, but hath he taught you to profit by thoſe means, and to entertain them in their efficacy, plainneſs and power? Does God pleaſe not to let you alone in your ſins? For God to leave us to be peaceable & quiet in our ſins, is a very ſore Judgement. Laſtly, do you ſtill find upon every relapſe and failing, your hearts deeply ſenſible thereof, and affected therewith? then may you comfortably ſay, theſe are the diſtinguiſhing Marches indeed, and conclude they are accompanied with his peculiar love.

3. What are the *ſecret workings of your hearts* towards God? what are your deſigns? your thoughts? your endeavours ingaged upon? is it to purſue the World? is it to ſtop every Door, at which danger and trouble may enter? or is it to approve your hearts to God, and to mind your duty, and in a way of well doing, to commit your ſelves to him? is this your care? this you may know by the ſecret workings of your

your Hearts, and by a ſerious Reflection upon all the paſſages of your Lives.

4. What is *the meaſure by which* you meaſure and *paſs a Judgement* upon all kinds of Objects? Do thoſe things ſeem moſt hateful to you, that are loathſome to God? and you moſt careful to ſhun that, which may hinder you from attaining this love of God, or a clear ſenſe of this love? therefore do you hate ſin, and vanity, and all thoſe things, that ſtand in oppoſition to this Priviledge? do you make this your Rule, to value Ordinances at a high rate by, becauſe theſe are of great advantage to you, in reſpect of your Communion with God, and the enjoying of his love and favour? and do you mourn, and lament the removal of theſe, or your being ſtraitened, as to theſe kind of advantages upon the account, in reference to the love of God, becauſe you cannot have theſe opportunities of Communion with him? Conſider, and ſeriouſly bring home theſe things to your own hearts.

Appl. In the next place I ſhall only ſpeak to one uſe more, that is by way of *Exhortation.* If it be ſo then, if you find it is thus with you upon your examination, that you have indeed warrantable hopes of claiming an intereſt in the peculiar love of God; Then labour to anſwer this *love of God*, with *love to God*, love in any is engaging; love in Superiours is more engaging; but love in God is infinitely more, who is able to return love for his love. There are theſe five hints I ſhall leave with you by way of direction.

1. Let this love of God be a powerful *constraint upon your hearts to do all the duty* that God requires. Let Gods love thaw your Icy hearts, and cause them to melt and flow into every duty, *Joh.* 15. 14. *Ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.* The love of God is constraining not only to do all, but to do all out of love, and not to think his Commandments greivous, or his Yoke heavy; but to serve him with the chearful compliance to his will in all things, 1 *Joh.* 5. 3. *For this is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments: and his Commandmenes are not grievous.* And this is when we account every thing of duty our reward; when we look on our work, as our ways. *David* saith, *In keeping of thy Commandments there is great reward,* Psal. 19. 7. Mark; he doth not say [there *shall be*] but *there is in* it great reward.

Indeed there is nothing that God commands us, if we did but rightly understand our selves, but it would be upon its own account, excellent, and desireable; however we may take offence at several duties that God requires, because they cross our corrupt nature; as mortification, self denial and the like; yet all these duties are of so high an advantage, that an intelligent person, (if there was nothing of command in them) yet would think there is enough in their own excellency, to engage us in the performance of them. That's the first hint, if we have any ground to hope that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

2. Manifest your love to God by a *through* de-

detestation, and a careful avoiding of what may offend him. You that love the Lord hate evil, Psal. 97. 10. *The love of God* (the Apostle saith) *constrains us*, 2 Cor. 5. The love of God to us and the love we have to him, it lays a holy necessity upon us; it not only constrains us to mind our duty more seriously but it wrests sin out of our hearts and hands, and engages to oppose every thing that is offensive to God, who shews so much of favour and loving kindness to us. *I charge you* saith the Spouse *that you wake not my Love till he please*, Cant. 2. 7. She was careful that he should not be dishonoured by others, how much more not to be so by her self.

3. Manifest your love by a *good construction* and interpretation *of all Gods providences*: *Love thinks no evil.* Harbour therefore no hard thoughts of God. Do *not charge him foolishly*, (as it is said of *Job*) in all his sufferings he did not charge God foolishly. This is a high expression of a grateful sense of Gods love to us, *&c.* Our love of God, if we think well of God, what ever he doth with us. Providence is an uncertain Rule by which to walk in judging of Gods love. *Gods ways are in the Sanctuary, his Paths are in the deep Waters, Clouds and thick darkness are round about him; but all his ways are Righteousness and Judgement*, Psal. 97. 2. Manifest your love by a patient submission to all the dispensations of God, and by a good construction of all his Providences.

4. Manifest your love to God by a *chearful undergoing* all *afflictions in the cause of God.* It is for your Lord; for him that hath done and suffered

suffered ten thousand times more for you, than possibly you can do for him. Manifest your love by a cheerful submission, when your Case is clear in doubtful things, the Case will be otherwise: The *Apostles* rejoyced that they suffered reproach and dishonour in the *Cause* of Christ, *Acts* 5. 41.

5. Manifest your love to God, *in Labouring to bring others* to partake of the love of God. You that see some ground in your selves, to hope that you have an interest in the love of God, be actively diligent to help others what you can, to get an interest in this love; for this is a high testimony of our love to God. Peter *lovest thou me? Feed my Sheep*, Joh. 21. 16, 17. you know how our Saviour repeated it three times, to shew that he would take this very well at his hands.

In the last place one word more to them, who have good hopes, that these great things do belong unto them. *Labour to keep up a fresh and lively sense of Gods love* in your hearts. Though the love of God be invariable thus far, *whom he loves he loves for ever*; yet the sense of this love is very mutable. Be very careful therefore to keep your Evidences clear and unspotted; do not blot them by sin. *David* lost the sense of Gods love for a long time, by those great lapses of his, and though God had pardoned him, and did yet love him; yet it was a long time, before he did recover the sense of it. Be diligent in the use of those Ordinances, by which the sense of Gods love is most cleared, and kept fresh in your hearts. Alas those, that do the most

ſt partake of the love of God, may have their bings, and flowings as to the ſenſe thereof, in h. 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifeſt my ſelf to him.* If we would have further manifeſtations of the ve of God, we muſt go on in ways of obedience to God. Be therefore often Communing with your own hearts, and looking into your own Souls, and conſider your ways, *&c.* how matters ſtand between God and you.

On the *other hand* I ſhall ſpeak one word to them, who upon examination find *ground to fear*, that they are rather under Gods diſpleaſure, then intitled to his peculiar love, that are rather the objects of his wrath, then the ſubjects of his ſpecial love. Oh *think what a woful eſtate* thou art in. Oh think what comforts thou by thy negligence and diſobedience haſt deprived thy ſelf of. Think what dangers thou lieſt open to every moment, there is nothing between thee, and everlaſting miſery, but a fraile life; and the thread of this life how ſoon God may cut it aſunder, none knows. Think what *uncomfortable*, and an *unſafe* eſtate thou art in. Do as *David* in another Caſe did: He would *not give ſleep to his Eyes, nor ſlumber to his Eye lids, till he had provided a place for the Ark of God.* So do you give all diligence, that you may attain reconciliation to God, and an intereſt in this great priviledge, that you have heard of this day, of the love of God.

SERMON.

SERMON XII.

Rom. 8. ult.

Nor height nor depth, &c.

I now proceed to a third Observation.

3. Doct. *There is this transcendent excellency in the love of God which speaks it, an inestimable support to his People, in all their distresses, that those who have once been made Partakers of this love, can by nothing be deprived or dispossessed of it.*

HEre is a large Enumeration of particulars, *death* cannot do it, though it can separate from all things here in this World, *life* cannot do it, the *troubles* of life, nor the *comforts* of life. I shall not insist on these things further. There is this vanity in the best of all our Creature enjoyments, that there will be (nay there cannot but be) a parting with them. The rich man that now prides himself in the multitude of his riches, in the greatness of his Treasures, in the largness of his incomes,

mes cannot rationally but think (if he does not, he does but delude himself) that he cannot carry his riches with him into the other World, to be the Flames of Gods wrath, to corrupt the Executioner of Gods Vengeance. It was *Jobs* acknowledgement, *naked came I out of my mothers Womb and naked shall I return.* He came into the World without, and he must leave all these things behind him, when he goes out again, *Job.* 1. 21. In the 12 of *Luke* you read of that Gospel Fool, when he began to applaud himself in his condition, *saying Soul thou hast Goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Thou Fool* (says God to him) *this night shall thy Soul be required of thee: then whose shall those things be that thou hast provided?* they are thine now, but whose shall they be before to morrow? there must be a separation from all these things. The greatest of men that are, that now over-top all about them, they must ere long be levelled, and made equal to their Neighbours. There is no difference between the dust of a Nobleman, and the meanest person; yea Crowns, and Scepters, which are such dazeling things in the Eyes of the world, these ere long must be resigned into the hands of Successours; there must be a separation from all these things. Nay all these relations that have the greatest indearment in them that can be; as the Relations of Husband, and Wife, and Parent, and Child, and Pastor, and People, and Friend, and Friend, (*there is a Friend that is nearer then a Brother*, saith *Solomon*,) there must be separation from these, there must be, there cannot but be so.

Your

Your Fathers where are they? the Prophets do they live for ever, Zach. 1. 5. observe this general Rule; there is no Fixation, no ſtability in any thing, but in this only; *viz.* the love of God.

For the clearing of this obſervation I ſhall ſpeak to 2. things.

1. Something by way of *Explication*.
2. Something by way of *Confirmation*.

1. By the way of *Explication*, rightly to ſtate the Caſe concerning the love of God, and to ſet truth its due bounds: This I ſhall do by propounding ſeveral diſtinctions.

1. We muſt *diſtinguiſh* between the *common love* of God, which manifeſts it ſelf onely in common Mercies, in preſerving us and providing for us theſe outward things; *and the ſpecial love* of God which conſiſts in diſtinguiſhing, diſcriminating Mercies. Now it is plainly clear, that the Apoſtle cannot ſpeak here of the common love of God; becauſe this love may be removed, and turned into hatred. God ſhewed a great deal of love to *Saul*, in chuſing him out of all the Tribes of *Iſrael*, to be head over his People, and *Saul* himſelf was at firſt very ſenſible of the goodneſs, and love of God to him in this reſpect; and therefore when *Samuel* tells him how God, 1 *Sam.* 9. 21. had choſen him to be the head of his People, *Saul* anſwered and ſaid *am not I a Benjamite of the ſmalleſt of the Tribes of* Iſrael? *and my Family the leaſt of all the Families of the Tribes of* Benjamin? *Wherefore ſpeak I thus to me?* he thought his was too much kindneſs to be ſhewed to ſuch a mean and unworthy perſon as he was.

Nay

say in the beginning of his Reign God did wonderfully honour him, both in giving him the hearts of his People; its said *God touched the hearts of his People*, chap. 10. 26. and likewise in giving him success against his Enemies: Yet after all these favours which were but Fruits of common love, *Saul* for his disobedience was cast of: *He* first *rejected God*; and then *God rejected him*, 1 Joh. 15. 23. when *Samuel* expostulated with *Saul*, and told him, he had not executed the Commission he had received from the Lord, he had not destroyed all the *Amalekites*, according to the Commandments of God; he pleased himself with a fine excuse, *the People took of the chief of the things to Sacrifice to the Lord*, 1 Sam. 15. 22, 23. Saith *Samuel*; *hath the Lord as great delight in burnt Offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the voyce of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better then Sacrifice; and to hearken then the fat of Rams. For Rebellion is as the sin of Witchcraft, and stubbornes of iniquity and idolatry: Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being King.* Here was first favour from God, and then anger: but this was but the common favour of God. The Apostle doth not speak of this. So concerning that case, the prosperity of the wicked, which hath so much staggered the faith of Gods People, and put them to a *non plus. Why do the wicked prosper?* what expostulations do we find, not only in *David*, but in many other holy men in Scripture? in this Case, God may be bountiful to all men, but this is but his common love. But now if we speak of what love

the

the Apostle speaks of here, it is special love which is manifested in distinguishing Mercies in those *Gifts and Graces, that are without Repentance*, Rom. 11. 29.

2. We must *distinguish* between the peculiar love of God *in it self*, and the appearance *and evidence of it* to our apprehension. This love in it self hath a real constancy, though in our apprehensions it may be seemingly uncertain. God is ever careful to love his People, with this peculiar love *really*, though this love may *not always* be *visible*, and apparant to us, *Isa.* 49. 14. read there the complaint of the Church, and the Church is as dear to God, as the most beloved Wife is to the tenderest Husband, She is said to be betrothed to God, nay God is said to marry her, *Hosea* 2. yet you see the Church complains, *And Zion said the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.* Not only forsaken, but forgotten; not only cast out of doors, but quite cast of; this was the sense she had of her own Case. But God answered that Objection with many comfortable and gracious promises in the verse following, *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her Womb? yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* I might bring a whole Cloud of Witnesses to prove this truth, that the love of God is real and constant, when in our apprehensions it seems to be uncertain, and that he then loves us when he seems to have taken off his love from us, Psal. 77. 7, 8. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth*

his

his promise fail for ever more? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender Mercies, Selah. Shut them up that there is no hope of future Mercies. *I said this is my Infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.* This was the Fruit of his deliberation, when he had recollected his thoughts, this was my weakness, it was not so with God; Gods love is certain and constant. It is many times with gracious Souls, that are beloved of God with a peculiar love, as it was with *Hagar*, she wept and lamented; she looked on her self and Child as hopeless, till the Angel opened her Eyes to see the Well, *Gen.* 21. 16. *And she went and sate her down over against him a good way off, as it were a Bow shot: For she said, let me not see the death of the Child. And she sate over against him, and lift up her voyce and wept. And God heard the voyce of the Lad: and the Angel of God called to* Hagar *out of Heaven, and said unto Her, what aileth thee* Hagar? *fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the Lad where he is;* 19. verse *God opened her Eyes, and she saw a Well of Water: and she went, and filled the Bottle with Water, and gave the Lad to drink.* Her Bottle was spent, her hope was quite gone, but God opened her Eyes. So it is said of the Prophet, 2 *Kings* 6. 15. when he saw such a multitude that came against him and his Master. *And when the Servants of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold, an Host compassed the City both with Horses and Chariots. And his Servants said unto him, alas my Master, how shall we do? And he answered fear not: for they that*

be with us, are more then they that be with them. And Elisha *prayed and said Lord I pray thee open his Eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the Eyes of the young man, and he saw and behold the Mountain was full of Horses and Chariots round about* Elisha. This Eye is the Eye of Faith; now when this Eye of Faith is dim, objections are raised; but when God opens this Eye, this dispels all these Objections. How ever the love of God is constant, though to our sense and apprehension, it may many times be over clouded and dark, in *Isa.* 50. 10. you read of *Children of light walking in the darkness*, those to whom comfort was their right and priviledge; they who had a real Title to it, yet those Children of light sate in darkness. This is the Case of many gracious Souls. I add this to the former as it is the distinguishing love of God, the Apostle speaks of in the Text, so it is the distinguishing love of God, as to its reallity, not to its visibility.

3. We must *distinguish* between the love of God *in its self*, and various *degrees* of this love. I grant not only in appearance but in reallity, God may withdraw his love many degrees (understand it of the effects of this love, for the affliction admits not of more or less) we may be separated from this love of God some degrees, but we are never separated from it totally, or all together. God may less love us (in the sence above noted) but not cease to love us; there may be some little intermission, though there is no total cessation; that canot be: God hath promised, Heb. 13. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* There is a great many

Ne-

Negations in the original, no leſs then *five*, in that one place, I will not, I will not, I will not, I will not, I will not. Now for the clearing of this, let me ſpeak to ſome particulars, becauſe all depends upon this, this is the main thing in this point.

1. God may withdraw the manifeſtation of his love *in Temporal bleſſings*, when he doth *not in Spiritual*. We are apt to judge of Gods love to us by theſe outward comforts, and when theſe are removed, we are then apt to think that Gods love is reſtrained, as *Gideon* argues in *Judges* 6. 10. 13. when they were oppreſſed ſo much for the Midianites. *And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and ſaid unto him, the Lord is with thee, the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his Miracles that our Fathers told us of; ſaying, did not the Lord bring us up from* Egypt? *but now the Lord hath forſaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the* Midianites. This was by reaſon of their oppreſſion and outward troubles. God may withdraw the manifeſtation of his love as to Temporals: But as God may beſtow temporal mercies in anger, ſo he may remove theſe favours. For example: when the People of *Iſrael* were ſo nice and dainty, that they muſt be fed with Curioſities, God anſwered their deſires, *Pſal.* 106. 15. but with all *he ſent leaneſs into their Souls*. They had better have been without theſe comforts, then to have had them on theſe Terms. So God may love, and doth love, his People, when he doth not manifeſt his love in temporal bleſſings.

2. God may ſuſpend the manifeſtation of his love *in ſpiritual Comforts*, when he doth not

ſuſpend his love *in ſpiritual Graces.* This is a higher degree. For Example: when God ſends his Spirit to Convince a poor Soul, to humble it, to wound it, thereby to prepare it for mercy; there is little of comfort viſible now in this, *John.* 16. 8. this is the Method, wherein God promiſeth his Spirit to be a Comforter; firſt to convince of ſin, then to comfort. Firſt to humble, and then to exalt. After theſe wounds, and bruiſes, and caſtings down, theſe diſtreſſes of Spirit into which the Soul is brought; then to bind up, and comfort: There is at preſent ſeen little of love all this while; and yet there is a great deal of this real love; becauſe all this while God is preparing the Soul for mercy, and that comfort that at preſent it feels the want of. You know in the exerciſe of Repentance, and humility, and a contrite and a broken Spirit, the Soul is not ſo ſenſible of the love of God; but the love of God then appears, though not in Spiritual comforts, yet in Spiritual graces; and after in reviving and quickening them.

3. God ſometimes ſuſpends the manifeſtations of his love *in the very graces* of his People; but then it is *not in theſe Graces that concern the ſafe being* of his People; but in theſe graces that concern their *well being.* Gods People may be ſafe when they are not in ſuch a chearful and flouriſhing condition. For example: God may leave his People ſo far, as that their Faith (to wit of evidence) may be in the dark, their hope may be over-clouded, their joy may be eclipſed; it may be ſad with them, in reſpect of theſe kinds of graces at preſent. But as to their

their other graces that concern their safety, as humility, and dependance on God and some actings of Faith, these God keeps alive all this while.

Again, all the withdrawings of Gods love from his People, the gradual withdrawings, as they are but gradual and partial, so they are *but temporary* and for a little time, Isa. 54. 7. 8. *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my Face from thee, for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* It was not total, it was but for a moment; it was not final, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee The darkest night with the People of God, shall have a bright morning. *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Joy for the upright in heart.* Though it be as seed that is cast into the ground: all the comforts of Gods People may seem to be as seed cast into the ground, which first dies before it lives; yet there will be a Resurrection; it is but for a little time, that God deals so, that God withdraws thus gradually from his People, and that in these two respects.

1. In respect of Gods *withdrawing from others*, he withdraws from them so as *never to return.* I mean those that are not his People, the wicked. Depart from me, and so depart from me, as everlastingly to depart from me. *Depart from me into everlasting burnings*; this is a departing without returning.

2. It is but for a little time in respect of what the People of God *themselves deserve.* For there

is not the least departure of ours from God, but it deserves an everlasting departure on Gods side from us. For us to leave him, to cast off his yoke, to own any other Master, but him, deserves that he should utterly leave us.

Lastly, all these withdrawings and darknings, these gradual withdrawings of Gods love *tend* very *much to the advantage* of his People. If God withdraw his love in temporal blessings, it is that he may manifest more of his love in Spiritual Mercies. If God take away from us a Creature comfort, he by this kind of Rod, shews us the necessity of living above our comforts, and of living only upon himself. They are admirable designs, that God hath in these kind of seeming expressions of his displeasure against us. He therein expresseth very much of love to us; his designs are gratious, partly to wean us from this world, by shewing us the vanity of it, and partly in giving us more of himself, and to let us see the need we stand in of him; and partly that we may have greater experience of his goodness, in his comforting supports under the greatest burdens, that can befal us. Had not the People of God such losses and crosses and tryals in Creature comforts, they could never have tasted so much sweetness in the promises, nor in the supports of the Spirit, nor in the comforts of Gods presence. but by Gods withdrawing, the gradual withdrawings of God as to his manifestations of his love in Spiritual blessings, God many times, does it, that they may not withdraw from him: He therefore hides away his Face, thereby to put them upon

seek-

seeking after him. We are apt to be very cold, and slight, and remiss in the things of God, & he to awaken us many times takes this course.

Again, God sometimes forsakes us in spiritual comforts, that he may not forsake us in great, or blessings. Comfort is not at present, so necessary as other blessings are. Many may go mourning all the days of their Lives, but if they go on in the way to Heaven, though they go mourning thither, one Minutes enjoyment of the glory of Heaven, will recompence for all. God doth it to enlarge their graces, and to fit them for greater comforts afterwards. The sum of all under this head, as to the distinguishing love of God here spoken of, and the reallity of this love is, that though God doth not in the same height and degree manifest himself in his love to his People; yet nothing can separate from the love of God. God may not manifest his love in that eminency, (as you have heard) yet there is nothing that can make a total, or final Separation from the love of God.

Now for the *Confirmation* of this truth I shall give you some Arguments.

1. *Arg.* First from the *freeness* of Gods love free grace is the only Spring and Fountain, of all Gods love to his poor Creatures. If there be any thing of love in us to God, this cannot be the Cause, or Motive, of Gods love; in regard it is the effect, and fruit of antecedent love. This is clear; if there be any thing better in us then in others, it is because God hath been better to us, then he hath been to others, and therefore the Apostle thus expostulates, 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who*

maketh thee to differ, &c. What hast thou that thou didst not receive?

Now because there is nothing of loveliness in us, but it is purely the freeness of Gods grace, that is the Motive of his love to us; this speaks it an everlasting love: and the force of the reason lies in this, because if the Foundation or Motive of Gods love to us, had been any thing that he had discerned in us; then, as it was something, that was pleasing in us, that was the Motive of his love to us, so that which is displeasing in us would put an end to his love. If our merit did procure it, then our demerit would have forfeited it; and this alas we do every moment. But you find all along in Scripture, that it is the good will and pleasure of God, to which all his love to us is ascribed, *Luke* 12. 32. *Fear not little Flock, for it is your Fathers good pleasure to you give the Kingdom.* It is Gods good pleasure, its not you have deserv'd it, but he hath shewn you his goodness in being thus bounriful unto you, in bestowing it upon you. So you have it very frequently repeated *Eph.* 1. 7 *In whom we have Redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* It is grace, and riches of grace, that God shews any thing of love to us. So you have it several times mentioned in that Chapter. This is one Argument to prove the love of God to his People to be everlasting, because it hath no other Foundation, nor Fountain, but his own goodness; his goodness is an everlasting goodness, and therefore his love must be an everlasting love. Was the Foundation of Gods love any thing in us, alas

we

we are mutable Creatures. You know in our Primitive estate we lost all; yea where we were in an estate of greater advantage, then we can ever arrive to here on earth; when we had nothing of weakness, or ignorance, or corruption, but were fully furnished against all kind of assaults; yet then barely the mutability of our will lost all; but now the love of God doth not depend on the will of man, but the free grace and goodness of God himself.

2. *Arg.* The *Faithfulness of Gods promises.* God hath promised this, mark *this* is the sum of all Gods promises, herein consists the excellency of the Covenant of grace; it carries everlastingness and in disoluableness in it. I will turn you to one or two places, *Jer.* 13. 3. *The Lord hath appeared to me of old, saying, I have loved thee with everlasting love: Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* Its called there an *everlasting* love, and you find it promised likewise *Jer.* 32. 38. *And they shall be my People and I will be their God,* ver. 40. *And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good.* Do but observe, it is an everlasting Covenant, and the promise of of this Covenant is this, *I will not turn away from them, to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* I will neither cease to love them, nor shall they cease to love me: God takes care of both parts. He hath promised for himself, that he will not, and he will so take care of them, that they shall not, cease to love.

3. *Arg.*

3. *Arg.* The *immutability* of Gods *decrees.* This ſhews the love of God to be ſo fixt, ſo everlaſting, that nothing can ſeparate from it, or diſſolve. That God is the great Governour of all the world, and that all things are managed by his infinite Wiſdom, is acknowledged by all; and that he governs all things according to his decrees. This is the *Idea*, or Copy, of all that comes to paſs; this appears from the Eternity of God. God doth nothing now, but what he decreed in Eternity. Eternity is one point with God; there is no firſt, nor ſecond, nor laſt things with God. That theſe decrees with God are immutable, appears from the perfection of God: To take up new Councils argues imperfection. God loves none but thoſe whom he elected; and elected none, but thoſe whom he decreed to love. Now this Election is an intention in God, for the glorifying the riches of his grace in ſome perſons, *Eph* 1. 5, 6, 7. the Apoſtle ſpeaks with that limitation: *Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of Children, according to the good pleaſure of his Will: To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: In whom we have Redemption.* So that there is a particular deſignation of theſe perſons to partake of this ſalvation, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *Nevertheleſs the Foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth thoſe that are his.*

Again Election includes in it thus much; a preparation, and ſanctification, of all means whereby thoſe perſons, that are deſigned to ſalvation, ſhall infallibly be brought to it. God doth

doth not only design to glory, as the end; but also to grace, as the means. And for the working of grace in them, and for the preserving of his People in a State of grace: God undertakes for both. Now the fulness, and unchangableness of these decrees, argue the love of God to be unchangeable. As God hath intended some to glory as the end; he intended by grace as the means to bring them to that end, 2 Thes. 2. 13. 14. *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, Brethren, Beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation; through sanctification of the Spirit & belief of the Truth: Whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*: That is the glory purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ. And if this love of God flows from his electing decree, it must needs be everlasting; because God cannot be frustrated in his decre.

4. *Arg. The fulness of that care that God takes* of his People, though they may be tempted, and assaulted, and meet with sore buffettings; yet he will not let them *be tempted above what they are able.* 1 Cor. 1. 13. and when they are the sorest beset with difficulties, and under the greatest fears, and sad thoughts; yet even then God hath the same care of them, that he had of St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. *my grace is sufficient for thee.* That one expression that we have, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. is enough to clear this truth: *Who are kept by the power of God through Faith unto Salvation.* you read in the verse before, of Gods reserving of Heaven for them, and in this verse of God's

pre-

preſerving of them for it, Though they may meet with many Rubs, and Interruptions in the way to Heaven, yet they are kept by the power of God through Faith unto Salvation; they ſhall not fall ſhort of glory; God doth ſtill love them, and they ſhall find the Fruit of this love to be everlaſting happineſs. His grace is omnipotent grace, and therefore it is that our Saviour comforts his Diſciples, with this conſideration, Joh. 10. 29. *My Father is greater then all, and none can pluck you out of his hands.* Now if God takes ſuch care of his People to preſerve them, then there is no fear of their falling ſhort of his glory.

5. *Arg.* Laſtly, The *many aſſurances* that God hath given his People of his everlaſting love to them.

He hath given them *his word*; he tells them *whom he loves he loves to the end*, Joh. 13. 1. he hath told them, *I will never leave you nor forſake you*, Heb. 13. 5.

Nay he hath given them not only his word but his *promiſe*, which is more than a ſolemn word, Jer. 32. 40. *And I will make an everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good.*

Nay he hath not only given them his promiſe but his promiſe *confirmed with an Oath*, Heb. 6. 17. 18. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the Heirs of promiſe, the immutability of his Counſel, and confirmed it by an Oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lie, we might have a ſtrong Conſolation*, &c.

Nay

Nay he hath confirmed his Oath with a *Seal*, he hath given us his hand and Seal; and he hath given his People the *first Fruits of the Spirit* whereby they are *Sealed up to the day of Redemption*. So that you see the love of God hath this transcendent excellency in it, that it is everlasting. There is nothing, that enemies can do, to put a period to it; and there are all things in God, that might give us an assurance of the everlastingness thereof.

Use, Now to make some Application of this point in a few words.

First, This may *inform* us of the *folly* of them who *fix upon any thing on this side God*. There is no everlastingness, no fixation, no stability, in any thing, but in God only. *I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy Commandments are exceeding broad*. Alas all other things are but as Clouds that are passing away; they are not: why should we set our hearts upon things that are not? they are not because they continue not. In fixing our hearts, and hopes, and in building our expectations, on any thing besides God, and placing our comforts on any thing besides the love of God, as we highly dishonour God, so we highly wrong our own Souls.

Hereby we highly *dishonour God*, because we prefer the Cistern before the Fountain; yea we rather chuse to build on the Sand, then upon the Rock of Ages; we think our selves better in the hands of Creatures, then in the hands of the Almighty, and infinitely gracious God.

And

And we *wrong our selves* because we bring our selves under an absolute necessity of being frustrated and disappointed, though we may be as industrious as the laborious Bee, to wander from this to the other part of the world, to go to this, and that Flower; yet we are sure to meet with nothing, but disappointment, but God is a sure refuge, his love is stable and secure to our Souls. Nay we do what we can to put God far from us, when we fly from him, and make the world our comfort. We bid as it were God to depart from us: We tell him we can do well enough without him; we can do well enough with other things besides him; we say as they did, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy love, *Job* 21. 14.

2. It may *inform us how* such Discourses as this is, *may cause our hearts to burn* within us; as it is said of his Disciples, who were going to *Emaus Christ* appeared to them, and they knew him not, but afterwards when he had left them, then they recollected their thoughts, and said *How did our hearts burn within us whilst he spake unto us?* that God should love such as we are? and that with an everlasting love? and so as that nothing should be able to take off his love from us? not our sins, not our provocations? this is a wonder. Though these may be as so many Clouds to darken his love, yet this is a priviledge peculiar to all true and sincere Believers. Now since God doth love us so wonderfully, how should this cause our hearts to burn within us?

To burn with the *Fire of Repentance* to purge away the dross of our sins, that ever we should be

be so foolish, unwise, and disingenious, to requite so good a God who hath so loved us.

And with the *Fire of love*; to love God, and to do what we can in acknowledging such love in him to us. And with the *Fire of Zeal* for him, that hath shewed so much of kindness to, and care of and over us.

2. *Use*. The next use is by way of *Exhortation*, and in that I shall speak to two sorts of persons.

First, To them who find themselves as yet *Strangers to this love of God*: Let me speak to them. Oh do but think how sad a condition you are in at present! labour to affect throughly your hearts with the sadness of this condition; though you may have never so much of other Mercies, yet if you have not this Mercy; the single want of this, is enough to imbitter the largest confluence of all your Creature enjoyments. It is this alone that can bear up our Spirits while we live; and comfort our hearts when we dye; and it will go with us after death, and beyond the Grave. To want this, is to want that, which no other enjoyment can make up; indeed, if we have the love of God, there is enough of the enjoyment of that, to compensate the want of all things else! Oh therefore labour first to be sensible of your condition, and to get your hearts affected with it, and then stand no longer capitulating with God, but accept of Mercy, and that thankfully, upon the terms that God offers Mercy. Is God willing to bestow his love upon you? and is it such a love that nothing can deprive you of it, when you

once

once have it? and is it a mercy that may be purchased on such easie terms; And are you unwilling to accept it? Oh! *It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.* Do not stand off longer; make no terms; raise no objections; but come up to the terms which God requires. If it be to the *cutting off a right hand*, or *plucking out a right Eye*: And bless God that you may be accepted on such an account. Go to God and plead his Sons blood; and plead his Mercy; and though there is nothing in you to procure his love, yet make use of these things that may help you. Do not give over the use of means, but wait upon God in his Ordinances, that they may bring you over to partake of this love of God.

2. *Exhor.* To them *whom God hath blessed with this love*: I shall speak one word to them. If God hath bestowed on you this great favour, to own you, to love you, (to love you in and through JesusChrist) you have cause to be thankful. For God to love you, Truly it is a distinguishing mercy; such a mercy as God doth not vouchsafe to all. It is a free mercy; a mercy that God never bestows upon any account, but only upon the account of his free grace. Now be thankful therefore, if you partake of the love of God, it is a mercy that but few of his Creatures do partake of; and it is a mercy that any do partake of it. That God should set his love upon fallen man, and pass by fallen Angels: That God should set his love upon Creatures, it is much; but that he he should set his love upon apostate Creatures; upon Creatures that are so much

below

below him, and upon sinful Creatures, that so much provoke him, what cause of thankfulness have we, that do partake of this love? but be careful, that you are built upon a sure Foundation as to this, *examine* what is your love to God, his truth, his ways, and ordinances. Again this mercy, is the sum of all mercies: If God loves us (as one speaks) then himself is our God, in them all in God is ours; that is for our support, and comfort, and refreshment.

In the next place be *careful to preserve* this love; be careful of doing any thing, that may cause God to withdraw any measure of his love from you, and make use of all kinds of means and helps, whereby you may have this love cleared, excited, and quickened; and upon every withdrawing of the love of God, be careful to recover it. Resolve as *David* did, Psal. 132. 3, 4, 5. *Surely I will not come into the Tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my Bed, I will not give sleep to my Eyes, nor slumber to my Eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the Mighty God of Jacob.* Here was a great deal of earnestness. So do you resolve never to be at rest nor quiet, until you have recovered what you have lost. We find that God does upon several accounts withdraw the manifestation of his love from his People: *Sometimes to chastise* them for their sins; this was *David's* Case; and if this be yours, then make *David's* practice your pattern: Be humble for your sins; return to God, beg his Spirit to secure you against future Relapses.

Sometimes God doth it to try them: As this was the Case of *Job*, and if this be your Case, Do as *Job* did when God seems to cast you off follow God, and do not you cast off him. God (it may be) is trying your desires to see whether you are willing to part with him or no: when he seems most in your apprehensions to be neglectful of you, do you then labour to stir up Strongest after desires him.

Somtimes he withddraws his love *when his people do not value it.* As it was with the Spouse: Christ withdrew, when the Spouse was in Bed, and he knockt, and she was willing to arise. If this be your Case, do you as the Spouse did, be willing to rise and seek him, till you find him.

Lastly, Be *careful to improve* this love of God, but how shall we do that?

If you are sure this priviledge belongs to you, then live up to this priviledge, live in contempt of things of this world: And make use of all those things, that may quicken you in ways of obedience. God would not only have his People to serve him, but to serve him with chearfulness; and because his People of *Israel* would not serve him with chearfulness, in the enjoyment of all things; *therefore he gave them up to serve their Enemies in nakedness, and hunger, and in the want of all things.* Therefore be careful to make thankful returns of obedience to God, through the whole course of your Lives; and labour to bring others to partake of those dainties, and refreshments, that you have experienced the sweetness. But let me leave this with you. Be-

ware

ware you be not over hasty in thinking you are intituled to this priviledge, when indeed you are not; this is a great delusion among Professors there are many Professors are yet rotten at the bottom; therefore look to your hearts: And if you have found upon examination that you have good grounds to hope, that you belong to God, and have an interest in his love, then live up to this Mercy.

SERMON XIII.

Rom. 8. ult.

Doct. 4. *The principal Ground, and assurance which we have of the stability, and certainty of the love of God, to his People, is because it is in and through Christ.*

THe love of God therefore most evidently appears to be sure, and everlasting, because it is built on so sure, and everlasting Foundation.

This Doctrine consists of two Parts.

1. What ever God hath of love to any of his People, it is only upon the account of Christ.

2. That this love of God, through Christ to his People doth therefore appear to be certain, and unchangeable, permanent, and lasting, because it is in and through Christ.

What ever God hath of love to any of his People, it is only upon the account of Christ. Look upon common Mercies, that God preserves

ſerves you, that God ſupplies you, and provides for you; do you think there is any thing of worth, or deſert in you, that you enjoy ſo much of health, and ſo many outward comforts? it is not upon your own account, that God is thus bountiful; and yet we find, it was ſo much the folly of the People of *Iſrael*, that they were ready to attribute all the kindneſs of God, to ſomething or other in themſelves, and therefore it is that God himſelf is ſo often their Remembrancer, and Monitour, to put them in mind, and to correct thoſe miſtakes, about his chooſing them to be his peculiar People, whom he owned above all the People in the World: Beſides, they were apt to think, that there was ſomething in them that might incline God to this kindneſs, ſo ſays God in *Deut.* 7. 7, 8. *The Lord did not ſet his love upon you, nor chooſe you, becauſe ye were more in number then any People, but becauſe the Lord loved you*, &c.

You may delude your ſelves with theſe fancies, but becauſe the Lord loved you, he choſe you, and he loved you becauſe he loved you; His love had no motive but what was from himſelf, no motive but only his own loving kindneſs, and goodneſs, *Ezek.* 36. 22. 23. *Therefore ſay unto the Houſe of* Iſrael, *thus ſaith the Lord God, when he promiſed great Mercies to them, I do not this for your ſakes, oh Houſe of* Iſrael, *but for my Holy Names ſake*, &c.

The kindneſſes that God ſpeaks of there, are highly great, and yet not any of them were upon the account of any thing in them. And this it is really with us now, as in ſome few inſtances.

1. God's

1. Gods electing love, which is the first born of all Mercies, and the first link of that golden Chain, which you have in this very Chapt. 28, 29. *whom he did foreknow he also did predestinat*, &c.

This electing love, it hath its first rise from the absolute will of God, This is not the absolute purchase of Christs merits, & yet this is through Christ, in some sense, *Eph.* 1 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him, that is in Christ*; as in the verse before, we are chosen in him; it is not said for him, so that all the kindness that God hath for us, even this, which seems to be an Act of the highest Freedom, and the most eminent expression of Gods rich grace; That he should chuse, and and pick out some, and select them from the common multitude of mankind, and to set them apart as special objects of his favour, (though this was from the absolute will of God,) was in, and through Christ; if you ask how, I answer, we are chosen in him, not as the Foundation of our election, but because we are chosen in him for his Members, as He is our head; That this first love of God had some reference to Christ, though not as the onely procuring Cause, yet as the consummating Cause to accomplish, is abundantly evident through the Scripture, we are elected in him, that is, that he should perfect this blessed and gracious decree of God upon us, *Eph.* 3. 11. *According to the Eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* What purpose was this, it was a purpose to save some, to set his

Heart

Heart and love upon some, his electing love was thus far in Christ.

2. The love of Conversion, is in, and through Christ, *Eph.* 2. 10. *We are his Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, &c. And though God is the sufficient Cause, of all the grace we partake of, yet Christ is the meritorious Cause, it is the gift of God, and yet withal, it is the purpose of Christ; it is God alone that bestows grace, and it is for the sake of Christ alone that he doth bestow it, compare those two places. *James* 1. 17. you read that *God is the Father of Lights*. But it comes all from God, in and through Christ, *John* 10. 10. *I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly*. God is willing to give it, but it is in and through Christ that he gives it.

3. Again, to instance in the love of God in Justification; it is God alone forgives sin, and our Saviour herein appears to be equal with the Father, because he hath committed all power into his hand, power to forgive sins. Now as God only can forgive sin, so it is onely for the sake of his Son that he doth forgive it, *Eph.* 4. 32. *Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*. If God hath forgiven you, it is not for your own sakes, but for the sake of Christ, do you forgive one another, pass by injuries, forgive offences, & make this your pattern which is the highest pattern that ever was, or can be, *Col.* 1. 14. *In whom we have Redemption*

through his Blood, even the forgiveness of sins. We have Redemption, and Forgiveness, but all come streaming down in the Blood of Christ: In a word, to sum up all the several Acts of Gods distinguishing love, they are all in and through Christ, and therefore you read that Doxology, *Eph.* 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all Spiritual blessings in Christ.* He hath blessed us with the choicest blessings, but all these are in and through Christ.

I shall now give you some Arguments to prove it, and I shall only mention three.

First, Because God neither can, nor does love us as we are in our selves, *Matt.* 3. 17. *And lo a Voyce from Heaven, saying this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* It is not spoken of Gods love to him, in a common respect, but of something peculiar to him, and there is this double limitation as Interpreters note, this is the Son of mine, whom I eminently love, and this is that Son of mine, for whose sake I love the Sons of men; all do acknowledge that this love is a confined and limited love, that is spoken of here, but yet they explain it thus, *My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* That is, in whom I am eminently pleased, and for whose sake I am pleased with them, whose cause he undertakes. As that Oyl that was powered on *Aarons head*, descended to the Skirts of his Garment, so that love that God hath to Jesus Christ, descends to all his

his inferiour Members, *John* 17. 23, 26. *I in them and they in me, that they may be made perfect in one*, &c.

These are high Expressions, and such as exceed the capacity of all mortal men, that God should love us with the same love, wherewith he loved his Son; The most sober sense by Interpreters, given of these words is this, That God in and through Christ, loves his People, for his sake, with the same kind of love, though not with the same degree of love, *Eph.* 1. 6. *We are accepted in the Beloved*, if God accepts of us, or smiles upon us, it is in and through Christ, *Eph.* 1. 5, 6. *Having predestinated us to the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his Will.*

Secondly, God is so far from loving us, as we are in our selves, that he loaths us, for we are Enemies to him, and God is no Enemy to us. There be two notable Expressions in *Eph.* 2. 12. *At that time ye were without Christ*: what follows then, *being Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, &c.* If you are without Christ, you are without all good, for he is the Fountain of all good. Nay it is said of the very Elect themselves, 3. verse of that Chapter, *And were by nature Children of wrath even as others.* Ye were Children of wrath, though now you are Children of love, you were as others, equal with others, as to original corruption, and guilt; original sin, admits of no *Magis* nor *Minus*, it is not in one less, and in an other more,

but

but it is alike in all: As to our natural state, we are in the same Rank, and posture with others; we are at the same distance from God, as the worst of men that are in the World: Now consider, in our natural state how great a contrariety, and unsuitableness there is between the holy God and us, in our unholy estate; he is light, and in him there is no darkness at all; we are darkness, and in us there is no light at all; in him there is nothing of evil; in us there is nothing of good; and what Communion can there be between such as are so perfectly contrary. While we remain out of Christ, our imbred corruptions have made such a breach between God, and us, which is ever widening and growing greater; though it was great at first, yet it is growing greater, and God is become our Enemy, and we are estranged from the life of God, by reason of the Multiplication of our actual sins, renewed continually; and therefore God cannot love us as we are in our selves; nay he hates us, and accounts us Enemies, and he tells all such what they must expect from him, if you walk contrary to me, I also will walk contrary to you, *Lev.* 26. If you do carry it as Enemies to me, I will carry it as an Enemy to you; *Do you provoke the Lord to anger, are you stronger then he?* are you a fit Match, for the great God? Can your hearts endure, *and your hands be made strong, in the day that I shall deal with you?*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Such is the love that God hath to Christ, that (how loathsome soever we be in our selves) all is over looke if we are in him, though we are unrighteous, but yet if we be in Christ he accounts us righteous, 2 Cor. 5. Vlt. *He hath made him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be the Righteousness of God in him. He was made sin*, how? by *imputation*, and we are made the righteousness of God, how? by way of *imputation* too, our sins are charged upon him, and his righteousness is imputed unto us; though we are of our selves *Unrighteous*, yet by him we are made *Righteous*; therefore this is the Apostles advice, if you would take the most compendious way to answer all your doubts, and fears, and the speediest course to be above all objections, the way is this, *Examine your selves whether you be in the Faith, know ye not your own selves, how that Christ is in you except ye be Reprobates*, 2 Cor. 13. 3.

Now Christs being in us, and our being in him, are Terms equivalent: And if you can but clear this, that Christ is in you, all is well, and safe, and comfortable with you; but if Christ be not in you, you are in a state of Reprobation, which is a most sad, dreadful, and desolate condition; and thus I have cleared the first part of the Observation.

2. *Partic.* Because all the love that God hath to us, is in, and through Jesus Christ, therefore

therefore this love of God is certain and unchangeable; it is indeed such an Argument, as answers all Objections; we find our Saviour himself, making use of this Argument, in the like Case, *John* 14. 12. *Because I live you shall live also.* Be not dishearten'd, cast down, and despondent, if I *live*, and that is sure, and certain, so surely shall you live; if the head be above water, the Members cannot be drowned, though they be under water; if it go well with me, it cannot go much amiss with you; Indeed, this would be a diminishing of the love of God to his Son, if his love to him did not extend to all that do belong to him. But where the force of this Argument lyeth, shall be discovered in these Particulars.

First, Because all that are Christs, are made conformable to him, God loves his Son, because he is the express Image, and brightness of his own person. Now all that belong to Christ, have the Image of Christ upon them, and they partake of the same Spirit, 2 Corinth. 1. 21. *He that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit.* Whatever there is of grace, or goodness, or any spiritual Excellency in us, cannot be the first Motive of Gods love, but where God hath given such pledges of love, they are evidences, and an assurance of his further love.

Secondly, As God hath a love to his Son, he must needs have a love to all Believers, be-

because of that near Relation that they stand in to him; they are Members of Christ, Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of Flesh; Consider those Emblems by which the union between Christ and Believers are set forth in Scripture, he is said to be the Vine, and they the branches in this Vine: a Head, and they the Members under this Head; a Husband, and they the Spouse. God hath such an indeared love to his Son, that he cannot but have love to all those that are so near and dear unto him; what can be nearer then to be a part of Christ; that is a high expression that you have, in *Eph.* 1. 23. they are said to be the fulness of Christ, *the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* They are his body; if God loves this Son, who is the Head of this body, he must have a love to the Members also; they are his body, and the fulness of him that filleth all in all, that is all the Elect of God, as they are gathered in, so the body of Christ grows more compleat, and full.

Thirdly, Because of Christs ingaging on their behalf, as their Mediatour, and surety; this will appear in that Covenant of Redemption, that past between the Father, and the Son, as it is at large described, *Isa.* 53. 10. *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his Soul an offering for sin, he shall see his Seed, he shall prolong his dayes, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*

Observe

Observe it, here are the Articles, and Conditions of this Covenant of Redemption (the Covenant of grace is one thing, and the Covenant of Redemption is another; the Covenant of grace is that, that passeth between God and Believers through Christ; the Covenant of Redemption is made between God, and Christ) that, if Christ will condescend to become man, and undertake for the sin of all his, and make satisfaction for those sins, the Lord was well pleased with these Conditions; it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he made his Soul an offering for sin; now all the recompence, and compensation that Christ expects, looks and did agree for, is to see of the travel of his Soul, and then he should be satisfied; Oh how tender hath Christ been of your good; you would be happy if you were as tender of your selves; he was willing to leave all, and to undergo all upon no other account but this, (not that he should be a gainer by you when he had finished his course) in John 17. 5. *I have glorified thee on Earth*, &c. One would think it was some greater glory that Christ expected, but all that he begs is this, with the glory I had with thee before the World was, he desired no more, nor could have any more, because that was so great, it could be no greater; now that Christ should thus far ingage on the behalf of poor Creatures, this is a great ingagement to us,

and in respect of the Covenant of Redemption was a great ingagement upon the Father, and this was that which past between them; now that God that can do all things, who cannot lye nor do any thing unbecoming his own Excellency, is a sure evidence of the stability of his love to Believers, this being his condition with Christ in the Covenant of Redemption.

4. Because of the fulness of Christs satisfaction, the meritoriousness of what he hath done and suffered. There is not onely a sufficiency in the undertakings of Christ, to satisfie for all our Debts, to cancel all Scores, and acquit his People from all their guilt as *Heb.* 10. 14, *By one offering he hath perfected for ever, them that be be sanctified. By one offering*, the legal Sacrifices were often repeated, time after time, yea their most solemn Sacrifices had their Repetitions; these could not make the comers thereto perfect, but Christ by once offering himself hath paid all our Debts, and discharged us from the penalty our guilt exposed us to.

Again, as there is a sufficiency in point of satisfaction, so there is a Redundancy in point of purchase; not onely a sufficiency to acquit them from all their guilt, but a Redundancy to intitle them to all the glory, and happiness that they are capable of.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Because of the constancy of Christs Intercession; he did not onely purchase all blessings when he was upon Earth; but by his Intercession, he is pleading that purchase, by spreading that Blood that he hath shed before his Father, and thereby procuring all the blessed effects of it to the benefit of his People, Heb. 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them. He ever lives, and he ever lives to make intercession.* This was an ordinary salutation, as *Justin Martyr* observes amongst the Primitive Christians when they met one another, *The Lord is risen*; he is not dead who is the life of our hopes, he yet lives to make Intercession, Rom. 8. 34. *Who shall condemn? it is Christ that died.* That alone answers all kind of Objections; we have sinned, and offended, but Christ hath died to make satisfaction for our sins: *Yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, he is risen*, that speaks his personal advancement; *who ever lives to make Intercession*, that speaks the comfortable Fruit and benefit of it to us. The Intercession of Christ, must needs be of great force with God; our Saviour tells *Peter*, after he had told him his failings, *Nevertheless I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not*, and if I pray for thee, thou needest not question, but to find the benefit of my Prayers

ers; that God that hears the cries of his poor weak People, hath promiſed that *his Ear ſhall be open to the Prayers of the deſtitute, and therefore, he will hear their cries.* Can any imagine, but that this God *who hears the cries of the Ravens*, muſt needs have a high regard to the Prayers of his Son? this is the great advantage of all that are ſincere Believers, that they an Advocate continually praying, and interceding for them, at the Throne of grace.

Sixthly, Becauſe Chriſt by his interceſſion, is continually making up thoſe freſh breaches, that our ſins are a new occaſioning, between God and us; there is nothing in all the World can ſeparate us from God, but onely ſin, *Iſaiah* 59. 2. *Your Iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God*, &c.

Therefore all theſe inſtances that the Apoſtle gives here, of death, and Principalities, and Powers, *&c.* can onely hurt us ſo far, as they may be occaſions of ſin; for nothing but this can do it; and there is none of the moſt eminent Believers, but they have their various ſinful failings, which occaſion new breaches, But the love of God in Chriſt anſwers all this too, *if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt.* If we are offending, he is ſatisfying; If we are making God our Enemy, he is re-

reconciling, and making God our Friend.

1. Use by way Information.

First, It may inform us, what cause we have to bless God for Jesus Christ; you see all depends upon his undertaking, all our comforts here, and all safety hereafter, nay all our happiness for ever; all depends upon Christ; Oh what cause have we then to bless God for him, he is the gift of God, that is the summe of all gifts, and the Fountain of all gifts, for whatever of kindness God hath for us, it is upon his account; now if God hath given us his Son, how shall he not with him give us all things.

Secondly, This may inform us, of the dismal estate, of all those persons that are out of Christ, if God hath no thing of love to poor Creatures, but what he hath in and through him, then certainly, he must have nothing but hatred, and indignation against those persons that are out of him, *John* 3. 36. *He that believes on his Son hath everlasting life.* Everlasting Life is begun in his Soul, he hath the first Fruits of it; *But he that believes not is condemned already,* John That is the wrath of God is upon him before,

fore, and while he continues in his unbelief, and it is like to abide on him ſtill. O what a wretched Eſtate is every Unbeliever in, that place that was mentioned before, *Eph.* 2. 12. *Without Chriſt without Hope.* If we are without Chriſt, we are without every thing of comfort; Labour to ſee what you are in your ſelves, where you are while Prayers, and endeavours may do you good, and while the Door of Mercy is open. Conſider what you are in your ſelves, and what you may be in him. There is love, and mercy, and all kinds of bleſſings to be had for you, if God accept of you, in and through Chriſt, but you can have nothing of love from God but onely in his beloved Son.

Thirdly, It informs us, what cauſe we have to be thankful to God that yet we have means, and helps for the getting of an intereſt in Chriſt. Though our intereſt in Chriſt be doubtful; and it is good to doubt that we may labour to be more ſure, yet what cauſe have we to be thankful that yet we enjoy the means of getting an intereſt in him; this is an incomparable mercy, all your hopes depend upon him; though it is not clear to you, that you can call him,

yours, yet it is Mercy that you enjoy those means by which he may become yours! Oh seriously improve these means, you know not how soon they may be taken from you, or you from them, be careful therefore *to do the work of the day, while the day lasts, before the the night comes wherein no man can work.*

2. Use. Is by way of caution take heed of slighting Christ, either in his Messengers, or Ordinances, or Members, or in his truth, or wayes; you see if ever you do obtain any thing of favour from God, it must be only upon the account of Christ, and will you slight, or despise him, which you do, if you despise his Messengers, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that dispiseth me, despiseth him that sent me*; or if you despise his Ordinances, and will not make use of them, you despise Christ.

Make use of them you will say, you do make use of them.

But you may despise them in the slight use of them, when every thing of the ordinance is over, as well as when the ordinance it self is over, when you mind only the bare duty, and regard

not

not the consequence, and Fruit of this duty.

3. Use. of Exhort. never rest satisfied till you can clear up your interest in Christ, there was a strange kind of diligence in *David*, and a high kind of Zeal he expressed for God, when he would not recieve comfort, nor go up into his Bed, until he had provided a place for the Lord. Let the same Zeal appear in you, in the getting, and obtaining an interest in Christ. Oh never give your selves rest, until you have some comfortable hope through grace, that it is well with you, and when you have obtained this interest. Labour to walk worthy of Christ, Oh be not you a reproach to that blessed name which you profess, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from Iniquity.* Oh! have nothing to do with sin, for these can be coupled together, to profess Christ and yet to go on in a course of sin, is a contradiction.

4. Use. Lastly, This may be matter of unspeakeable comfort to the People of God, that are clear in this great Priviledge, that they have a right and title to it, it is so sure, and certain because it is in and through Christ, that God loves them, though they may have failings, and weaknesses;

as; yet still God loves them in Christ, as they are offending, so he is making up of breaches; therefore build all your hopes and expectations upon Christ, and labour to walk worthy of that encouragement which he vouchsafes to you.

FINIS.